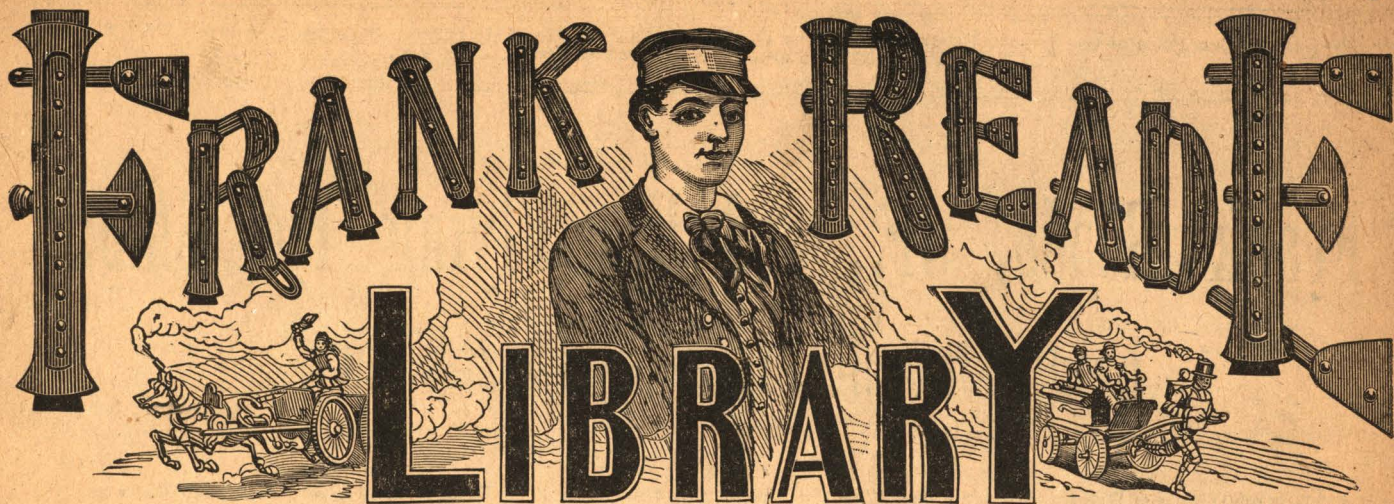


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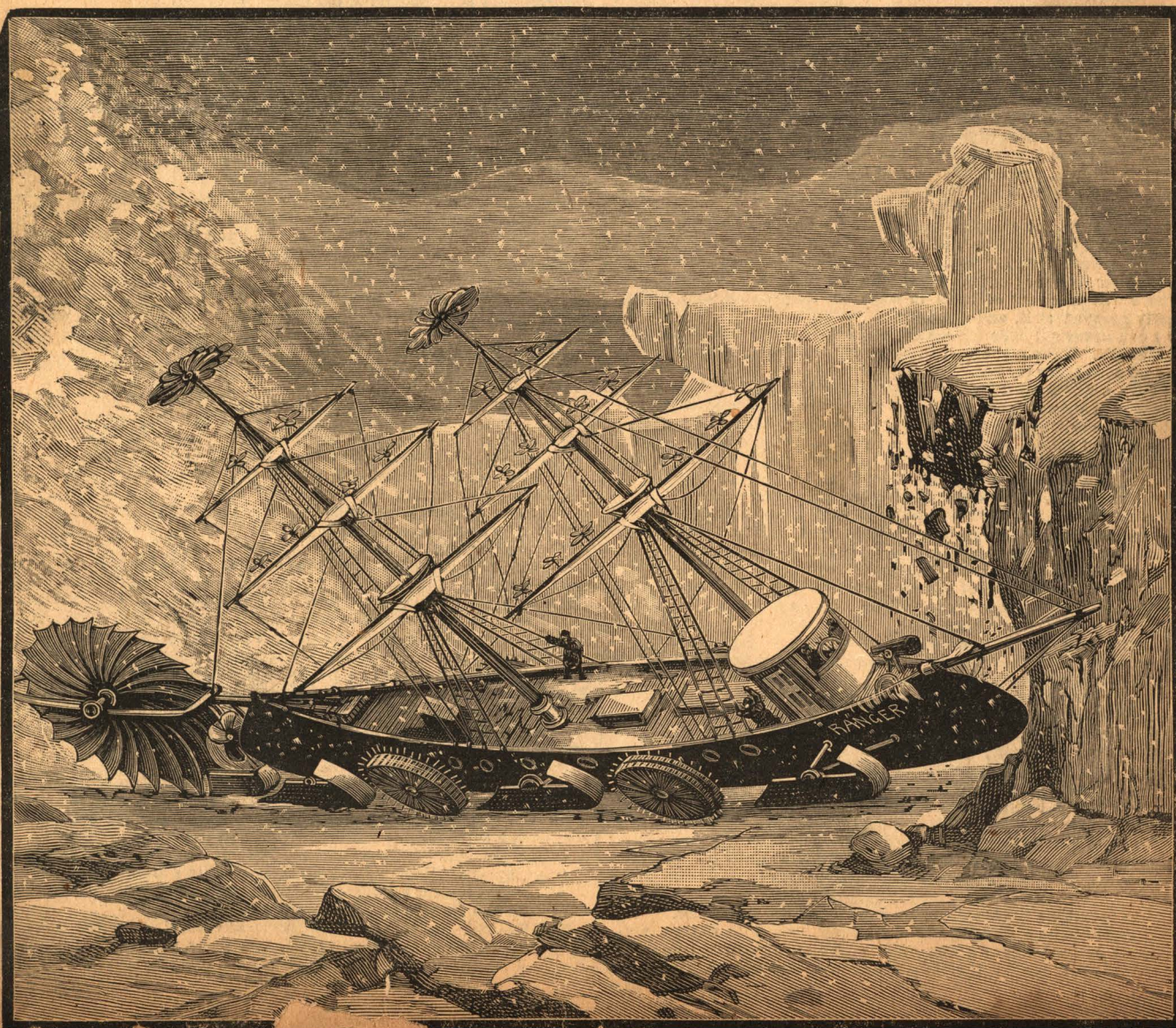
Vol. III

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Frank Reade, Jr.,

And His Flying Ice Ship; or,
DRIVEN ADRIPT IN THE FROZEN SKY.

By "NONAME."



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Frank Reade, Jr., and His Flying Ice Ship:

OR, DRIVEN ADrift IN THE FROZEN SKY.

By "NONAME,"

Author of "Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Cruiser of the Lakes," "Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Prairie Schooner," "From Zone to Zone," "The Black Range," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

STEALING A BOY.

It was late on a cold November night in the city of Boston, the sky was obscured by dark, stormy clouds, a bleak wind was whistling through the almost deserted streets, and the lights in the lamps flickered dimly.

A plainly attired man with white hair and a black mustache was walking away from the railroad depot with a handsome boy of seventeen, clad in the natty blue uniform of a military academy.

"Alfred Milburn," the boy was saying pleadingly, "do not keep me in suspense any longer. Tell me why you wrote me to come to Boston to-night from my school. What serious news have you to tell me?"

"You must prepare yourself for a great affliction, Walter Grey," the man replied. "I hate to break bad news, but—"

"Great heavens!" exclaimed young Grey, suddenly—"my mother—"

"She suddenly became insane, and I have had to place her in a private asylum," said Alfred Milburn, in low, gentle tones.

A stifled cry of woe escaped the boy, and he burst into tears, for his mother was the only relative he had in the world.

He paused, and glanced piteously at the lawyer who had been acting as administrator of the fortune his father had left, and saw that Milburn was very pale and greatly agitated.

As soon as Walter could master his grief, he asked, tremulously:

"When did this horrible misfortune occur, sir?"

"Just a week ago, my boy. I am very sorry for you. Brace up. She may recover her reason. I will take you to see her to-night."

There was a spark of hope in what the lawyer said, and Walter eagerly grasped at it, and answered:

"I can never get over this shock, but I shall try to be courageous, Mr. Milburn. Take me to her. Let me see my dear mother. Perhaps I can do something for her."

"Very well," replied the lawyer. "Come this way."

He turned into a street bordering the water front, and casting a rapid glance around, failed to see any one except three men, attired in the garb of sailors, crouching in an adjoining doorway.

The lawyer drew his handkerchief from his pocket, wiped his face with it, and while apparently returning it to his pocket, dropped it. Instantly the three sailors darted from the doorway.

One of them, in a captain's uniform, rushed up behind the boy, flung an arm around his neck, pulled his head back, and clapped a sponge saturated with chloroform to Walter Grey's nostrils.

A cry of alarm pealed from the startled boy's lips, but it was quickly checked by a pressure of his assailant's arm, and the moment he began to inhale the fumes of the drug he became stupefied.

Milburn recoiled a few steps.

His dark eyes were flashing with excitement.

He cautiously glanced around, and then saw a young man coming.

"Captain Ben Bolt!" he hissed.

"Well?" gruffly asked the man who held young Grey.

"There's someone coming."

"Blast it! But ther boy's senseless!"

"The fellow is running toward us."

"He's seen ther struggle then."

"Yes. What shall we do?"

"Carry ther lad aboard ther Red Eric."

"And you?"

"We'll lay that lubber out!"

The lawyer picked the drugged boy up and hastened over the muddy street with him toward a big whaling ship lying at one of the docks.

In the meantime the three sailors surrounded the newcomer.

He proved to be a dashing-looking young man, with a dark mustache, a symmetrical and athletic figure, and an intellectual face.

He had been behind the lawyer and the boy when they left the

depot, and seeing the assault and Milburn's indifference, he correctly concluded that the boy had been led into a trap.

"You scoundrels!" he panted. "What are you doing to that boy?"

"Keep away thar!" roared the captain, threateningly. "Mind yer own business, an' clear out o' this!"

"Never, until that boy is released!"

"Go fer ther meddler, my lads!"

The two sailors obeyed Ben Bolt.

As the three seamen closed in on him, the stranger doubled up his fists and struck out straight from the shoulder.

Biff! Bang! Thump! went his fists like spile drivers, and every-time they struck, a man went down.

"When people of your stamp fool around Frank Reade, Jr., you generally get left!" muttered the gallant stranger.

The sailors swore as they got up, and the captain drew a pistol.

"Cuss yer!" he growled, as he leveled the weapon at Frank's head, "I'll blow yer brains out fer them welts!"

Bang! went the pistol, and a cry escaped Frank.

He clapped his hand to the side of his head where the ball had grazed his scalp, and reeling back, fell senseless to the ground!

"Run, boys!" hoarsely cried the desperate captain. "I had ter do it or he'd a got ther best o' us! That shot'll fetch ther p'lice!"

They rushed over to the whaling ship unseen, leaving their victim lying bleeding and senseless on the sidewalk.

Boarding the vessel and going into the cabin they found the lawyer there in the gloom with the drugged boy.

"Well?" eagerly asked Milburn. "Did you down the stranger?"

"Shot him," answered Ben Bolt, with an oath. "I see yer got ther lad aboard all right, sir."

"Yes. You had better put him out of sight."

"Stow him below in a locker, boys," said the captain to his two men.

They carried the limp form of Walter Grey out of the cabin.

When they were gone Milburn handed the captain a big roll of bills.

"Here are the \$2,500 I promised you to shanghai the boy," said the lawyer. "You must maroon him in the Arctic regions so he can never return. If you should bring me evidence of his death I will double the amount I just gave you. Will you do it, captain?"

He bent nearer to Bolt and hissed this in such sinister tones that the captain started, and muttered hoarsely:

"D'yer mean fer me ter put him out o' ther way?"

"Yes," was the emphatic reply.

"Why d'yer want this done?"

"I'll make a clean breast of the matter. I hold some money in trust belonging to the boy and his mother. If both die I can do as I like with their fortune. Although the woman is sane I have paid dearly to have her confined in an asylum. She is disposed of. Now it only remains to get rid of the boy. This I leave to you."

"I'll do it," muttered the captain.

"Remember, the money I paid you is some of the boy's fortune. The remainder you are to get will come from the same source. If you fail, you will get no more of the bank notes and may have to not only disgorge what you now have but also answer in court as my accomplice."

"Trust me, Alfred Milburn!"

"I'll go now."

"An' as I've cleared my manifest in ther Custom House, an' thar's a tug waitin' ter hadl us out, I'll put ter sea right away so's no one will have a show ter get aboard an' find ther lad."

"You are bound for the polar regions now?"

"Ay, ay—ther Kara sea, off Nova Zembla, in s'arch o' whales."

After some further conversation the rascally lawyer parted with the villainous sea captain and went ashore.

The Red Eric put to sea immediately afterward, carrying the unfortunate Walter Grey away to the frozen polar regions.

In the meantime, a crowd had been attracted by the pistol shot,

and surrounding Frank Reade, Jr., they carried him into a drug store, where his wound was dressed.

He did not recover his senses until after the ship departed, and then found a policeman standing beside him, to whom he explained what had happened.

"My name is Frank Reade, Jr.," said the wounded young man. "I am an inventor of submarine boats, flying machines and overland engines and reside in Readestown. I have just invented a flying ice boat and came to Boston to get some things for her construction. While I was passing the railroad depot on my way to the hotel where I am stopping, I saw the man and boy go by in the same direction I was taking. Then I observed how he was led into the trap."

"What ship did they take him on?" asked the policeman.

"The Red Eric."

"Come and show me."

They left the drug store, and, reaching the dock, learned from some longshoremen that the whaler had just departed for the Arctic. It was a bitter disappointment, as they could not now hope to rescue the boy from his captors.

Seeing that he could do nothing further in the matter Frank took his departure and proceeded back to the hotel.

As he entered the office he observed a woman standing before the clerk weeping bitterly, and heard her say in sob choked tones:

"Do not refuse me lodging here, sir! You surely would not have me roam the streets all night for want of shelter."

"Madam," replied the clerk, "as you have no money to pay for your lodging here, I have no right to take you in."

"Oh, this is dreadful," said the lady in tones of great distress.

She was a very refined looking person, with gray hair, a good face, and wore a very handsome dress, but she had on no hat.

The clerk shrugged his shoulders and turned away.

Frank was moved with pity for the lady.

He saw that she was no professional beggar.

Approaching her and doffing his hat, he said politely:

"Excuse me for interfering, madam, but I could not fail hearing what you said. If you will allow me, I would be very glad to pay your expenses at this hotel for a week."

A cry of joy escaped the woman as she glanced at Frank.

"Thank Heaven!" she muttered. "I am safe—safe!"

CHAPTER II.

THE VILLAIN CAUGHT.

THE hotel clerk looked very much surprised at Frank's charitable deed, but took his money, made no comment, and assigned the lady to a room.

As she reached the parlor door, she beckoned to the inventor and he followed her into the room and asked her pleasantly:

"Do you wish to speak to me, madam?"

"I wish to thank you for your kindness," she faltered.

"It is not necessary," replied Frank.

"At least let me tell you how I happened to be in this plight."

"I admit that I am somewhat curious about it."

"Well, briefly, I am a rich widow with one child—a boy of seventeen, who is now at a military boarding school up the State. My fortune was placed under the administration of an unscrupulous lawyer, named Alfred Milburn. He calculated that if I and my son were out of the way, he could keep possession of our money. My name is Caroline Grey. I lived in a handsome dwelling on a good street, and my lawyer boarded with me.

"One week ago the wretch drugged me. When I recovered my senses I found myself confined in a private lunatic asylum. Milburn called and coolly told me he did it to rob me. He also stated that he intended to send for my son and have him carried away to sea, from whence he would never return. Frantic with apprehension, I managed to escape from the asylum to-night. That is why I have no bonnet on. Coming here, I tried to secure shelter until to-morrow, when I intend to state my case to the police. I will have Milburn arrested and baffle his design."

"Is he a tall man with white hair and a jet black mustache?"

"Yes—do you know him—have you seen him?"

"I saw him to-night. And your son—is he a well-formed boy with a military uniform of dark blue, trimmed with light blue braid?"

"Yes—yes!" excitedly cried the lady. "Walter has very fair skin and jet-black eyes. There is a small scar on his left cheek."

"I was not near enough to distinguish his features well."

"Near enough? You couple his description with that of Milburn—is it possible you have seen them together?"

"Yes—to-night. The boy was abducted."

A low cry of horror escaped Mrs. Grey, her face turned deathly pale, and a wild look sprang to her eyes as she gasped:

"What has happened? Tell me, quick!"

Frank detailed his adventure.

Mrs. Grey was overwhelmed with grief and despair.

"Bound for the Arctic ocean!" she groaned. "Oh, he will never come back alive! My poor, poor boy! This is dreadful—dreadful! Oh, what shall I do? I am wild—frantic—filled with agony!"

"Hush!" said Frank, gently. "I alone can give you hope."

"I do not understand you."

"Then I'll explain. I am Frank Reade, Jr."

"What! The wonderful inventor of whom I have so often read?"

"I am an inventor and my latest contrivance is a flying iceboat with which I have planned to visit the mysterious land of Nova Zembla. As my course will be the same as that of the ship Red Eric it is more

than likely that I shall fall in with that whaling ship. If I don't I'll hunt for it. If I find her I shall save your son. I swear it, for I have the means of doing so."

His words were so emphatic that renewed hope was aroused in the heart of the half distracted mother, and she dried her tears and asked:

"When do you intend to undertake this journey, sir?"

"Within a few days," Frank replied. "My flying ice ship is nearly finished. I came to Boston to get the few things I need to complete her. To-morrow I am going home, but ere I leave this city, I shall make it my business to help you to have Alfred Milburn arrested, so you can recover possession of the fortune of which he designs to rob you."

"God bless you, Frank Reade," the lady exclaimed, feelingly.

After some further talk, they parted for the night.

The inventor was accompanied by a little old negro named Pomp, and a rollicking, red-headed, pug-nosed Irishman named Barney O'Shea, who always went with him on his travels, and lived in Readestown.

Both were inveterate practical jokers, the coon was a good cook and played the banjo, and the Celt was an expert violinist, and ever ready for a fight or fun of any kind, while both were greatly devoted to the inventor.

They were domiciled in the hotel with Frank.

On the following morning the coon woke up early, dressed himself, and going out into the hall heard Barney snoring in his room.

"Golly, wha' lazy feiler dat Irishman am," muttered the dorky, with a grin, as he paused outside of Barney's room. "Specs he sleep de whole lib long day ef I done let him. Wondah ef I kin git in dar?"

He tried the door, found it unlocked, and entered the bed-room.

The Celt laid on his back with his mouth wide open, and Pomp stole over to the wash basin, turned on the freezing cold water full force, put his finger over the faucet and squirted it at the sleeper.

Swish—plunk! went the jet against the Irishman's eye.

Then a steady stream flew all over his face.

He gave a sudden start, the snoring ceased, and he sat up very much confused from being awakened so violently.

The cold water continued to squirt on him, and he gave a wild yell.

"Murder! I'm dhrowndin!" he howled.

Then he bounced out of bed.

Fizz—swish—flipp! continued the stream.

Barney only wore a red flannel under-shirt, and as the cold liquid flew around his limbs he jumped up in the air, his teeth chattering his hair on end, and roar after roar pealing from his lips.

"Begorra, I'm a dead man!" he roared, as he rushed, danced, hopped, and galloped around the room, followed by the cold stream and the laughter of the mischievous coon. "Howly beans, ther roof's leakin'! Ther poipes bushted! Ther house is afoire! Help! Help!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" howled the delighted dorky. "Haw, haw, haw! Lord amassy, looker de jumpin'-jack!"

And s-s-s-s-phff! Piff-piff-piff! went the water again.

By this time Barney got over his confusion and saw the coon.

He also observed the cause of his misery.

"Faith, it's ther naygur!" he groaned, as he tried to dodge the stream.

"Go it, Barney, yo' ole hyaena!" chuckled the coon. "Whoop her up! Dat's de step, honey! Oh, Lawd—looker dem legs fly!"

"Shtop it!" shouted the Celt wildly, as he raced around to avoid the freezing water. "Bedad I'm frozen. Pomp, ye spalpeen, wanst I get ther grip av me fingers in ther wool av yer head, I'll scalp yez wid wan pull."

"Hop, dar, yo' chimpanzee, hop, I say! I'se gwine ter gib yo' a wash if yo' nebbber hab one befo', chile!"

Barney flew into a closet.

Here the door protected him.

There were several pairs of shoes, a boot jack and sundry other objects lying upon the floor which he eagerly grasped.

The next moment he bombarded the coon with them from behind the door, and as the fusillade whizzed through the air, Pomp made an effort to dodge them.

He was not quick enough, and the next moment a shoe caught him a thump on the nose, a valise banged him on the ear and a whisk-broom pounded him in the eye.

With a howl of pain, as a second volley struck him, he charged on the Irishman who had come from behind the door.

The coon's head was down to butt the Irishman in the stomach, but just at the right moment Barney nimbly sprang aside, and with a terrible crash Pomp's head struck a panel of the door.

It went through, splintering the wood, and before he could withdraw his skull, Barney seized one of the bedslats and belabored him so that every thump sounded like a pistol shot, and the howls of the captured coon awakened every one in the house.

In the midst of the furor Frank rushed in, and although he could hardly refrain from laughing at the drenched Irishman and the stuck dorky, he assumed an angry look and cried, sternly:

"Stop that row, will you! Every one in the hotel is alarmed."

"Masther Frank!" muttered Barney, dropping the slat.

"Pull me out!" shouted Pomp. "I'se stuck!"

"Faix, I'll lave yer till yer cocconut dhrops off!"

"Oh, Lawd amighty! I'se got—"

He gave his head a jerk and extricated himself.

The moment he got free and saw Frank he wilted, and making a dive for the door vanished in the hall.

Frank and the other guests burst into a roar of laughter and followed him.

When the coon and the Irishman met at the breakfast table, they had so far forgotten their anger that the subject was not referred to.

Frank afterwards took them aside, told them all about Mrs. Grey and her son, and having introduced them to the lady they went to police headquarters and laid the matter before the authorities.

A detective took a warrant for the arrest of Alfred Milburn, and accompanying Mrs. Grey to her residence with Frank and his friends they went in and arrested the lawyer.

His dismay was intense when he saw Mrs. Grey free and Frank in her company, for he recognized the young inventor at once.

The rascal was locked up.

We may as well add here that he had to disgorge the money he held in trust for the widow and her son, and without much delay was sentenced to a long term in prison for his rascality.

The widow received her rights.

Having procured the parts of the flying machine they were after, Frank and his two friends assured the lady again that they would strain every effort to rescue her son, and then boarded a train for home.

Readestown, to where they went, was a beautiful little western city near a river that flowed to the Atlantic.

Here Frank dwelt in a magnificent mansion, near which stood the great machine shops and works in which his wonderful inventions were constructed.

The young inventor upon his arrival found an old friend there named Dr. Vaneyke, who had often gone with him on his trips.

The white bearded old scientist had heard that Frank had built a new flying machine, and being desirous of accompanying him in it on his proposed journey, had come from the Smithsonian Institute, with which he was connected, to join the inventor.

Frank was delighted at the prospect of having his old friend go, and readily assented to the plan.

On the following day, as the air ship was nearly finished, the inventor brought the professor out to the shop to see it.

Here a singular and unexpected incident occurred.

CHAPTER III.

DRIVEN ADRIFT.

THE room in which Frank's invention stood was a vast apartment, with sliding doors in the roof which could be opened to permit the exit of his flying machines from the interior.

In the middle of this room stood the flying ice ship.

The vessel was made of an extremely light, bullet proof material called aluminum, and looked like a two masted schooner, with a rounded wedge-shaped bow and stern.

At the truck of each mast was a large gyroscope, while upon the upper part of each of the yards many more of these wheels were arranged in a horizontal position to lift the engine in the air.

Upon the yards and stays were furled sails, to be used while traveling before the wind.

At the bow was a long bowsprit, a search light at its foot, and upon its deck, in the forward section, a pilot house.

There were three big steel ice runners on each side, and between them two spiked wheels for propelling the boat over the ice without sails.

At the stern was an ice rudder, above it a water rudder, a water screw, and on the end of a shaft an immense air-wheel for propulsion.

Bull's eyes broke the side of the hull to admit light into the interior.

As they stood looking at the boat which was operated by electricity the door bell rang, and Frank saw the professor start nervously, turn very pale, and glare at the entrance.

"What's the matter—you look nervous?" said Frank.

"I am nervous," admitted Vaneyke. "So would any one be who is innocent of murder, and is accused of killing a man."

"Why—I don't understand you!"

"Then I'll explain," said the doctor, "but until I do I don't want you to open that door, for I have a feeling that the police are there trying to get in and arrest me!"

Frank was amazed.

He knew that Dr. Vaneyke was a good man.

Murder was the last crime he was capable of committing.

He therefore said quietly:

"Tell me what your trouble is, professor."

"Night before last, while walking here from the railroad depot, I heard a pistol shot in a lonely part of the road, followed by the cry of murder," the doctor answered. "Running forward, I saw a man fall to the ground and another man plunged into the bushes. Beside the fallen man laid a revolver which I picked up. It was the weapon with which the man was shot; I next examined the body. The man was dead. The ball had penetrated his heart. Scarcely had I made this discovery when some constables came running up the road, and some men down the road."

"Among the latter was the murderer. I recognized him at a glance. He pointed at me and said: 'Arrest him; he killed the man, I saw him do it. See, he yet holds the pistol in his hand with which the crime was committed!' Although I protested my innocence, no one believed me. The men surrounded me; they were going to forcibly arrest me. Seeing how strong the circumstantial evidence was against me I fled and escaped in safety to your house unseen. Since then, I am sure the authorities have been searching for me."

"It looks black against you, Dr. Vaneyke."

"Shall I surrender myself and stand trial?"

"You may not establish your innocence if you do."

"What then shall I do?"

"Keep shady. If arrested you can't go with me."

"Very true."

"I want to leave as soon as possible in pursuit of the Red Eric to rescue Walter Grey. I can't do it if you are arrested with such a serious charge hanging over your head. No! You must not submit to arrest."

Bang, bang! came the sound of a volley of raps at the door.

"They're bound to get in," nervously said Dr. Vaneyke.

"After all it may not be any one after you."

"No one knew I came here."

"For safety get aboard the ice ship and hide yourself while I open the door and ascertain who is outside."

The professor complied.

He had hardly done so when the bell rang loudly.

Frank flung open the door.

Upon the threshold stood a detective.

"Well?" demanded Frank, keenly eying him.

"I am after Dr. Vaneyke, sir," replied the officer.

"What for?"

"Murder."

"Humbbug!"

"Here's the warrant."

"You are on the wrong track."

"Oh, no! It's proven. He's here, isn't he?"

"Stopping at my house—yes."

"Your wife just said he came out here."

"Well, you can't have him, sir."

"Do you mean to say you will prevent me?"

"Exactly so. He is an innocent man!"

"Let him prove it in court, then."

"At present he has no time to do that."

"But I must take him, Mr. Reade."

"Have you got a search warrant?"

"No," reluctantly said the detective.

"Then you can't come in here."

"I'll watch for him outside then."

"Very well," answered Frank, shutting the door.

He went aboard of the Ranger, as he had christened the flying ice ship, and opening a door in the wheel house, found himself in a large room.

It contained some furniture, a compass, steering wheel, levers for controlling the mechanism, and a number of registers.

A companionway led him down into a small, but beautiful cabin, where he found the professor nervously pacing to and fro.

Frank told him what transpired.

"It's just as I feared," murmured Dr. Vaneyke, despairingly.

"The detective will guard this place until he can get a warrant to come in after me. Then he will take me anyway."

"Not if I can prevent it," replied Frank.

"You cannot do anything."

"Oh, yes I can. A little more work will put the Ranger in perfect order. She is already equipped for her intended journey, and contains enough food and water to last several months. By tonight we will all leave here in her."

Dr. Vaneyke looked more hopeful.

Frank then left him, and going to the house, explained the situation to his family, Barney and Pomp.

A plan was then formed to get the detective out of the way.

The coon went out, and purchasing a white beard and wig from a costumer, he returned to the house, and one of Frank's mechanics was dressed up in the professor's clothes, and donned the false hair.

A saddle horse was led from the stable, the man looking very much like Vaneyke mounted the beast and away he rode.

The detective saw him, and pursued him at once, thinking he was chasing the old scientist.

Our friends then set to work upon the air-ship, and completed the work to be done upon her.

Dr. Vaneyke's trunk was carried aboard.

Nothing was seen of the detective all day.

By the hour of eleven that night the ice ship was almost ready.

The four friends were aboard, working by electric light with all the speed they could muster, and had taken leave of every one.

Scarcely had everything been put in readiness, when there came a tremendous pounding at the door again.

Frank rushed out on deck.

Addressing a gang of his men, he cried:

"Open the sliding doors in the roof, boys!"

"Some one is knocking, sir," ventured one of the men.

"Don't you open the door on your lives!"

"All right, sir!"

And away went the men to obey his orders.

The clamor outside now became furious.

"Frank Reade, Jr.!" yelled the detective's voice. "Open this door in the name of the law or I'll break it down!"

"He has discovered our ruse and come back!" laughed Frank.

"Do you hear me?" roared the officer, showering a volley of kicks and blows against the door. "You are breaking the law by harboring a criminal, sir, and it will go hard with you if you still refuse to let me take him out of there!"

"Go away," replied Frank. "You can't enter!"

"Don't be rash. I have several officers with me."

"I don't care if you have an army."

"Then I'll burst in the door."

"Burst away!"

Crash—bang—boom! came a heavy shower of blows.

Frank glanced at his workmen, and saw them trying to force open the sliding doors in the roof above the Ranger.

They obstinately stuck fast, though.

Fast and furious fell the blows against the door outside.

Frank began to get restless, and passing into the wheelroom he peered out the window with an anxious look upon his face.

It was evident that the officers had brought a battering ram to bear upon the door, for every blow they dealt it made it shake and caused every window pane to rattle.

"Lively there, boys, lively!" shouted Frank, impatiently.

"Yes, sir, but they stick!" replied the foreman.

An awful shower of blows now struck the door and it went down with a splitting crash, and the detective and several policemen rushed in.

Just then the doors in the roof flew open.

Seeing the professor aboard the air-ship, the officers made a rush for the Ranger to board her.

Frank grasped one of the levers and pulled it.

The gyroscopes flew around with a tremendous buzzing sound, and just as the officers reached the side of the boat she ascended into the air.

A yell of chagrin escaped the officers, for the Ranger shot through the now open roof and soared up into the dark sky.

They were baffled.

CHAPTER IV.

NOVA ZEMBLA.

"ESCAPED them, by thunder!" cried Frank, exultantly.

"Thank Heaven for that!" exclaimed Dr. Vaneyke.

Barney and Pomp had gone down below to attend to the machinery.

The rooms were magnificently furnished, and consisted of a cabin, a dormitory, dining-room, kitchen, store-room and engine room.

Each apartment was equipped with electric lights and an electric heating apparatus of Frank's invention.

The motive power was derived from a dynamo which was driven by a small petroleum engine, there was a special machine for the electric lights, and the mechanism of the gyroscopes worked by a large number of storage batteries.

Any height could be reached in the air, according to the speed at which the gyroscopes were run, and the huge driving wheel drove the ice ship along at a prodigious rate of speed.

Upon reaching an altitude of 1,600 feet, Frank slackened the speed of the gyroscopes to conform to the height at which he desired to remain, and put the driving screw in motion.

The machine was then steered for the north-eastward, and glided through the air like an arrow.

The machinery worked exactly as Jack designed, and the ship of the air operated beautifully.

Barney and Pomp were so delighted over the professor's escape that the former got out his fiddle and the latter his banjo, whereupon a lively tune was struck up and they played and sang until a late hour.

On the following morning the air ship was hovering over the Atlantic.

Pomp had taken charge of the cooking department, and the Irishman attended to the machinery when it became necessary.

The professor was a very much relieved man.

"Had I been incarcerated for that crime," said he to Frank as they went out on deck after breakfast, "I could not have gone with you, and might have been hung."

"For my part, I was determined that you should not fall into the detective's hands," replied the inventor, "for I was anxious to have you go with me on this cruise."

They shook out the sails, as the Ranger was going with the wind, and as the white duck bellied out, speed was added to the boat.

"Do you think we will meet the Red Eric?" asked Vaneyke.

"She has considerable start, but we may overhaul her as we can make very rapid headway," Frank replied. "I owe Captain Ben Bolt a grudge for the scalp wound he gave me, and I'll avenge myself by wrestling Walter Grey from his power."

"What is your destination?"

"The Kara sea and the island of Nova Zembla."

"It will be very cold there now."

"Well, the boat is well heated, and we have warm fur clothing on board," said Frank. "If there is ice on the island, we can travel over it on the boat's runners, to examine the remains of the mammoth you say you wish to get for the institute you represent."

"Yes. A gentleman of known veracity saw the body of the huge beast buried on Nova Zembla, and sent word to that effect to the Smithsonian with directions to find it. This, of course, is why I was so anxious to go with you, for I have orders to get part of the remains."

They then went inside.

The barometer showed a height of 2,000 feet.

Below them lay the north Atlantic, and a number of ships were seen dotting the surface in different places.

A constant watch with telescopes was maintained by those on duty for some sign of the Red Eric.

Having reached the British isles the ice-ship crossed the North Sea and sailed along the western coast of Norway.

From there she passed over the Barentz Sea at the north of Russia. Nothing was seen of the whaling ship and the island of Nova Zembla finally appeared in the distance.

Every day that passed by found the temperature decreasing.

Our friends were obliged to put on fur clothing, and the electric heating apparatus was put in operation.

It made the interior of the Ranger warm and comfortable and rendered its inmates quite cozy.

The mercury in the thermometer had gone down to within two degrees of zero, and the upper regions of the air became filled with fine needles of ice that stung the skin of our friends when exposed to it.

But little sunlight was seen each day owing to the winter season.

Moreover, the sky in this region was so filled with heavy, leaden-hued clouds that the meager light was still further reduced.

Upon first observing the icy particles that constantly filled the air Frank was very much amazed, and involuntarily cried:

"We have been driven adrift in a frozen sky!"

"There is the Island of Nova Zembla now," said the professor, pointing away to the north eastward. "It is a land the interior of which has never been explored yet."

Frank did not like the appearance of the island.

It looked like an elongated crescent, 600 miles long by 60 wide, and lay between 70 deg. 30 min., and 77 deg. N. lat. and 52 deg., and 69 min. E. long.

Its north-eastern extremity was west of the meridian of Yalmal peninsula, and its southern was separated from Vaygach Island by Kara Strait, 30 miles wide.

Nova Zembla was cut through the middle by a narrow winding channel called the Matotchkin Shar connecting the Arctic Ocean with the Kara Sea.

Upon a nearer approach to it Frank closely examined the place with a glass, and gained a fair idea of the interior.

The western coast was greatly indented by fjord-like bays and studded with many islands, and was less ice-bound than might be supposed, as a continuation of the warm current of the Gulf Stream flowed along the coast.

In the interior was an alpine region with isolated mountain peaks, a complicated system of spurs and deep valleys extending even under the sea.

At the north was a vast swelling of land covered with an immense ice sheet descending north and south to the sea coast.

All this region was covered with fields of snow descending in broad strips along the slopes of the isolated peaks, and feeding mighty glaciers in the deeper valleys.

While Frank was sizing up the desolate place a dense fall of snow began that hid the island from his view.

It was impossible to see where they were going, and as the wind had shifted around it became necessary to furl the sails.

Leaving the old professor at the wheel, Frank called the coon and the Irishman to help him, and they went out on deck.

Mingled with the great clouds of down falling snow flakes, were the dreadful needles of ice that stung their eyes, were inhaled in their lungs, and fairly penetrated their skin.

The halliards were slackened off, and as the canvas fell in lazy jacks, the work of furling was reduced to a minimum.

Down fluttered the square sails from the yards, while the stay sails were hauled to the bowsprit by the down hauls.

Barney was at the mainmast, Pomp at the foremast, and Frank had gone up forward.

The wind was driving the ice and snow in their faces.

As soon as the canvas was down on the yards, the daky and the Celt ran up the shrouds to tie it down with gaskets.

All hands worked like beavers.

The sails had nearly all been fastened, when the coon and the inventor were suddenly startled by hearing a wild yell from Barney.

It was followed by a snap like a pistol shot.

The foot rope had parted under the Irishman.

He fell toward the deck.

As he felt himself going, he flung out his hands.

They encountered a back stay and he grasped it tightly.

There came a violent shock on the rope and it parted under the weight of the Celt's body, but he retained his hold on the lower portion of it, and took a rapid turn of it around his arm.

Down he shot like a stone.

A shout of alarm escaped Frank when he saw his friend flying through the air, and go over the railing.

"Lost!" gasped the inventor, in tones of dread.

He rushed to the side, and Pomp hastened down from the yards.

Barney gave himself up for lost, for the Ranger was then at a height of 2,000 feet from the sea and he knew he was bound to perish before landing in the water.

When he reached the end of the broken stay, however, he paused with a shock that nearly pulled his arm out of joint and wrung a groan of agony from his lips.

His body bounced up in the air, and came down again with another jerk that fairly made him howl with pain.

But the turn of the rope around his arm saved his life and he swung there like a clock pendulum.

For a moment poor Barney was dazed.

As soon as he had sufficiently recovered his wits though, he seized the rope with his other hand.

That eased the strain on his arm and relieved his pain.

"Be heavens, I'm alive!" he gasped.

He was panting hard, but in a few moments he yelled:

"Help—help!"

Just then Frank reached the railing.

Peering over he saw the Irishman.

"Thunder!" he cried, with a thrill of hope darting through him.

"Am he gone?" cried Pomp, reaching the deck.

"No! Help me to haul up the broken stay."

"Wha' fo'?"

"He's on the end of it."

"Glory halleluyah!"

They both grasped the line and began to haul the Irishman up.

Barney was pulled half way up to the deck in this manner, when suddenly there came a shout from the professor.

"The ice ship is falling!"

Such was the cry that startled Frank.

He glanced up at the gyroscopes.

They were moving very slowly compared to the speed at which they had been spinning.

The cause was apparent to Frank at a glance.

Holding the falling ice and snow, the metal spars were so cold that the flakes congealed around the pivots, choking them so that the ice thus formed interfered with their revolutions.

CHAPTER V.

BARNEY AND THE BEAR.

"Pomp! We are going down into the sea!"

"Golly, Marse Frank, am de machinery bruck?"

"No, but ice is forming around the gyroscopes so they can't revolve."

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, hist up Barney den, or he drap in de sea!"

They pulled the imperiled Irishman up to the deck, and he heaved a great sigh of relief when he had a firm footing once more.

Shaking off the broken backstay that saved him, he exclaimed:

"Faith, I'd rather froze ter death up here than do be fallin' inter ther say!"

"There really isn't much choice in the matter," said Frank, "for we are going down anyhow. Hey, Dr. Vaneyke!"

"Well?" asked the old scientist.

"Put every volt of force in the stern screw."

"What for?"

"To try and reach land, sir."

The professor pulled the screw lever over, and with increased speed the flying ice ship darted through the snow flakes to the eastward.

Vaneyke had got his bearings before the blinding storm began, and although the Ranger was swiftly descending, she kept going to the landward at terrific velocity.

Frank saw that the sails no longer interfered with the movements of the ice ship, and as he and his companions were very cold, they passed into the pilot house.

A shout suddenly pealed from Barney.

"Land ahead! Port yer hullum!"

"A mountain!" gasped the doctor, obeying.

"We won't land in the sea at any rate!" said Frank.

"Yo' know whar yo' am, sah?" asked the coon.

"No," answered the professor, shaking his head. "But once we alight we will soon find Matochkin Shar, and as most of the whalers winter there at the Norwegian fishing stations we will be very apt to find the Red Eric there later, if not now."

"We must have passed her," said Frank.

"Howly floy!" gasped Barney, looking out the window, "there's ther say beneath us again!"

It was a broad sheet of water sure enough, but the inventor turned the electric current into the search-light.

As the bright glare pierced the falling flakes he saw that it was a stream of water over which they were flying.

In a moment the truth of the matter dawned upon his mind.

"It is the Matochkin Shar, the strait that cuts this island in two," he exclaimed. "See, we approach a shore."

He pointed ahead.

The Ranger was then dangerously close to the water.

But she was going ahead like a thunderbolt.

It was fair to presume that she would soon reach the land, and as this place was covered with ice, they rightly concluded that it was the northern side of the stream.

In a few moments more Frank stopped the driving wheel.

The Ranger was then but ten yards above the water and still falling fast, but she was close to the shore.

By the time she alighted, she had left the stream astern.

Her runners and side wheels acted like flanges in holding her bolt upright, and the impetus given her by her flight sent her gliding on her runners over the sparkling ice.

It moderated the shock of her descent.

Frank had taken entire charge of her now.

He at once dropped the gyroscopes.

Grasping the lever which raised or lowered the side wheels, he gave it a sudden pull, for he saw the boat swiftly gliding toward an immense crevice in the ice.

Down went the spiked wheels with a crash, and acting like a brake, as they were rigid, they scratched over the surface for some distance, and finally stopped the boat.

This occurred only just in time, for the Ranger had reached the edge of the chasm as she paused.

The place was dangerous.

Frank saw this, and turning a switch, he put an electric current in the side wheel motor, reversing it, and she backed away, the wheels digging into the ice, and moving the Ranger very easily.

They were then upon an immense glacier running down a valley embowered between two mountains.

Having brought the ship to a pause, Frank went up the masts and examined the gyroscope pivots.

It was utterly impossible to keep them clear of the ice without resorting to some artificial means of keeping the spars warm.

This he explained to his friends upon his return.

Various plans were suggested until at length Frank thought of running platinum wires into all the hollow tubes, and connecting them with the electric heating apparatus in the engine room.

To carry this out would require time, and as they had plenty of it to spare, they began to try the experiment.

The following day had dawned before the wires were arranged according to Frank's plans and the snow storm had stopped.

When the current was turned into them, the ice soon began to melt on the masts and spars and the gyroscopes spun freely.

The experiment was a perfect success.

"We can go up in the sky without fear now," said Frank smilingly, as they sat down to breakfast.

"Suppose we run for the Norwegian fishing station and consult its inhabitants about the Red Eric?" asked Vaneyke.

"Is it on this side av ther shtrame?" asked Barney.

"Yes—on the eastern side of the island near the strait."

"Gwine up in de frozen sky?" asked Pomp.

"No," answered Frank. "We'll use the boat's skates as there is plenty ice all over the ground here, and we can save trouble by staying down."

Accordingly, after the meal, he ascended to the turret and started the ice wheels when the ship glided smoothly along.

The stern runner steered her the same as on any ice-boat, and was automatically lowered to the ice level.

Along sped the Ranger to the eastward, keeping as close to the stream as possible, so as not to miss any ships that might be at anchor in the ice-covered water.

As the sun only appeared for a few hours at a time, the days were of very short duration, and they had to keep the electric lights lit.

The storm had left a mantle of snow upon the ice-covered ground, through which the Ranger's runners cut like huge knives, and her crew observed a range of lofty mountains at the left.

They were clad with snow.

Scarcely any vegetation was seen, but as they glided along, view was caught of a few vagrant birds, some lemmings, ice fox and several immigrant reindeer.

Off along the coasts, though, countless numbers of ducks, geese and swans were flying about the rocks, making the air resonant with their cries, and the ceaseless flapping of their wings.

Several miles from the glacier Frank observed a mass of beetling ice blocks strewn across their path.

There were several openings among them, though, through which he saw he could steer the ship to clearer ice beyond.

"How in the world could these immense blocks of ice have got there?" asked Dr. Vaneyke in surprise, when he saw them.

Frank pointed at a mountain cliff half a mile away.

"If they fell from there," said he, "wouldn't they have been propelled along over this glassy surface to the very strait?"

"Sure enough, if they came from enough height to project them a great distance, for they would certainly slide freely."

"Do you notice how much warmer it is here than it was in the sky, doctor?" asked the young inventor.

"Quite a difference in the temperature."

"Pshaw! There goes one of those staysails shaking loose!"

"I'll go out an' boild it down, me laddy!" said Barney.

He hastened from the turret, and going out on deck, made his way out to the end of the long bowsprit.

Barney caught hold of the refractory sail just as the Ranger ran into the icy pass, and secured it where it belonged.

He then started to make his way back to the deck, when one of the forward runners struck against an icy hummock.

It made the ice ship bounce, and flung Barney from his perch.

The Irishman gave a yell and landed on his back upon the ice.

He barely had time to roll aside when the grinding runners flew by within an inch of his body, for Frank had seen what had befallen him, and swiftly steered the Ranger aside.

Had the steel blade hit the Irishman it would have cut him in two, for the weight of the boat was considerable, as it was very large.

"Beheavens, I've broke me neck!" roared Barney.

"Man oberboard!" shouted Pomp, seeing the mishap. "Man oberboard!"

The coon rushed out on the deck, and when the Ranger passed Barney, he scrambled to his feet.

Running after the ship, he yelled:

"Shtop her! Don't lave me behind."

Frank had to keep her going a few moments though, for there was a bend ahead around which she was dashing.

The Ranger quickly distanced him.

As he started to rush around the bend after her, a huge brown bear darted out from behind an icy projection in front of him.

Before the startled Irishman could stop himself, he struck the beast, fell over it and landed on the ice again.

The bear uttered a savage growl, and turned upon Barney.

It had been frightened by the flying ice boat before, but now seeing a human being, and angered by the blow the Celt dealt the brute, bared its formidable teeth, and rushed at him.

Up jumped Barney very much startled.

He wanted to run after the Ranger again, but could not do so as the bear was between him and the boat.

"Bedad I'm nipped!" he gasped.

Seeing the ugly brute coming for him, he clapped his hand to his belt in search of a weapon to defend himself.

He was not armed.

A cold chill went over him upon finding this out.

He realized that he could not do anything with the beast now and taking to his heels, ran away hotly pursued by the animal.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FISHING STATION.

NONE of the Ranger's crew had seen what had befallen Barney, as the bend in the pass hid him from their view.

Frank, therefore, did not hasten to stop the ice ship's wheels, and to his surprise he found her flying down the side of a steep hill.

To stop her now with the brake was almost an utter impossibility, for the wheels were apt to trip her up.

He, therefore, raised them, and let the boat go on her runners.

She gathered speed every moment, as the hill was steep, and was soon roaring down like a locomotive.

The snow flew up in showers from in front of her runners, and a loud, buzzing sound came from them as they cut through the ice.

Away she flew, and reaching the bottom of the hill, Frank abruptly turned her to the right, to avoid a mass of rough ice ahead of her.

No sooner did she fly around the base of the hill, when to their amazement the boat began to sink.

She had run into a drift.

Above the snow rose the tops of a number of ice huts, shaped like inverted bowls, and a tremendous shout in a strange tongue emanated from the huts the boat struck and crushed in.

Some of the inmates of these huts had been hurt.

The rest swarmed out into passages cut through the drift, and got upon the level ground above the hollow where they had their huts.

All of them were dark skinned people, somewhat resembling the Esquimaux of North America and Greenland.

They wore fur clothing, with pointed hoods for their heads, and carried walrus spears, muskets and knives in their hands.

Although amazed at the sight of such a peculiar boat there, these Nova Zembla savages soon recovered from their surprise, and brandishing their weapons at our friends, whom they now saw, they began to prepare for an attack.

Their animosity was aroused by the injury done so innocently to some of the inmates of the ice huts.

Frank could do nothing with the ship but let her stop of her own accord when she plunged into the snowdrift.

"Natives!" he exclaimed in surprise, upon seeing them.

"Armed and angry at us too," added the professor.

"We've ruined several of their huts."

"Yes, and injured the inmates of some."

"That's what they are angry about."

"Evidently," coincided the professor.

"I didn't notice the huts until we were upon them."

"Nor I, as they were nearly covered up with snow."

Just then Pomp came rushing in from the deck.

The boat had paused half buried in the snow and the coon was covered.

He was very much excited, and cried warningly:

"Dey's a gang ob niggahs out dar gwine ter shoot!"

"Close the metal shutters over the windows, doctor."

"Better start the gyroscopes," said the professor, complying.

Just then the yelling natives fired at the boat, a shower of arrows, spears and musket bullets striking the Ranger.

All the wooden weapons broke against the hull of the ice-ship and the leaden bullets flattened against the plates.

"Where's Barney?" asked Frank, anxiously.

"Done leabe him astern, sah," Pomp answered.

"We must pick him up ere the angry natives see him."

"Gwine ter shoot 'em?"

"No. They can't harm us here."

"Look out! They're jumping on the deck!" said the doctor.

"I'll soon get rid of them," Frank answered.

He put the gyroscopes in operation and the air-ship pulled herself up out of the snow bank into the air.

A dismal howl of dismay pealed from the throats of the natives on her deck when they found themselves being carried up.

They lost no time jumping down into the snow drift, and when the last man had left her the ones on the ice discharged a second volley up at her from their weapons.

The Ranger mounted to the height of the hill she descended before Frank stopped her.

He then glanced down, and saw that there were nearly one hundred men, women and children standing on the ice glaring up at the boat.

"They are a peculiar race!" he muttered.

"Never heard of before," said the doctor.

"Whar am Barney?" asked Pomp.

Frank glanced around, but saw no sign of the Irishman.

He then steered the boat back to the pass.

She was within a dozen feet of the ground, ran back the way she came from, and had scarcely turned the bend when Frank heard a tremendous yell from Barney.

"This way wid yez fer ther love av Heaven!"

Such was his shout.

Frank saw him.

Perched on an icy ledge.

The bear squatting at the bottom.

Both glaring at each other!

"Jerusalem!" cried the inventor.

"Why doan' yer git down?" laughed Pomp.

"He's cornered in earnest!" the professor remarked, dryly.

"Take the wheel!" said Frank. "I want some bear meat for dinner."

The professor complied, and the young inventor took a pneumatic rifle that threw dynamite bombshells and went outside.

Aiming at the bear, he fired one shot.

Sput! went the piece, and zing-g-g! went the ball.

A loud report was heard when it hit the bear's head.

When the flash of fire and glare of smoke vanished the bear was lying on its side violently kicking, and the upper part of its head was scattered to the four winds of heaven.

"Bull's eye!" yelled Barney.

"Lower the Ranger!" said Frank.

When she alighted the inventor descended the ladder.

Walking over to Barney, he asked:

"How did he send you to roost?"

"Faith, he didn't," grinned Barney. "I wint av me own accord."

"I don't see how you got way up there!"

"More power to me toes, I clumb ther wall loike a floy."

The Irishman was a dozen feet from the ground, upon a little shelf, that was projecting over an almost smooth wall.

When the bear chased him, and he found it gaining, he ran up this wall by means of the tiny protuberances and indentations until he reached the edge of the shelf, when he pulled himself up the rest of the way.

If he hadn't been frightened he could not have done it.

Dropping down, he told Frank what had happened to him, after which they began to skin the bear, and cut away the choicest parts.

These were stowed aboard the ice ship.

It was hardly done when Pomp shouted:

"Heah come de niggahs!"

The natives had been swarming up the hill, and seeing the boat on the ground, made a grand rush for her.

Pomp did not wait for orders.

He pulled the gyroscope lever, and the Ranger bounded up into the air, thwarting them a second time.

At a height of 290 feet she paused.

Just then Frank entered the turret.

He saw at a glance what happened.

"We'll have to keep up in the sky to avoid those beggars!" he remarked.

"Dey's boun' ter git aboa'd."

"Apparently; but they won't succeed!"

"Gwine ahead, sah?"

"Yes. Right on along the Strait."

The coon started the boat along through the frozen sky, and the fine needle-like particles that filled the air blew into their faces so strongly that they were forced to close the window.

The natives were left out of sight astern.

Finally the sun came up.

As its burning rays fell upon the desolate landscape, the ice gleamed and sparkled like myriads of diamonds.

A cold bleak air was blowing against the boat; but she ran through it with the greatest of ease, and reached the water front.

"Even had we remained down below, we could not have traveled over the ice," remarked Frank. "See there, Pomp, great chasms in the ground in some places, and insurmountable hills in other places."

"Wha' yo' call dot ahead dar neah de ribber?"

"A settlement! That's the place we are searching for."

"An' dar am some ships along de sho'."

"Sure enough! Whalers—every one of them!"

"Wondah if de Red Eric am among dem?"

"That we will soon find out."

"Am it time fo' her ter be heah?"

"She could, if she was not prevented by floating ice."

"I'se jes' itchin' ter git dat Walter Grey way from de captin'."

"By this time the poor boy may be dead."

"Dead!" muttered Pomp, aghast.

"Yes; Ben Bolt may have killed him," said Frank.

Just then the doctor and Barney came up from below.

As soon as Vaneyke saw the settlement, he said:

"Yes, that's the Norwegian fishing settlement—see the flag?"

"Do most of the Kara sea whalers meet here, sir?"

"They have to until the cold weather is over."

"But the water is pretty well open, professor."

"Yes, I know it's a mild winter, but if the Red Eric comes to this sea at all, she will stop at that fishing station, I'm sure. I'm glad we've found the place, for it's near here the body of the mastodon I'm after is to be found buried in the ground."

The air-ship continued on toward the wretched little cluster of wooden huts and soon reached them.

News of her approach had been communicated to the inhabitants and the crews of the ships.

They were all grouped on the shore watching the ice ship.

Frank sent the Ranger down on the ice near them, and they all made a rush for her to find out what she was.

In a few moments the ship was surrounded by the curious throng.

CHAPTER VII.

INTO DANGEROUS GROUND.

THERE were three whaling ships in winter quarters off the Norwegian fishing station, and all were from the United States.

The American sailors were among the Norwegians, and when they saw the stars and stripes fluttering from one of the Ranger's masts, they set up a loud cheer.

Both captains then hailed Frank, asking what sort of craft the flying ice ship was, and he told them and asked:

"Has the Red Eric, of Boston, arrived here yet?"

"No, sir," replied one of the captains; "but as we know she is coming here, we are looking out for her daily."

"Is the captain a friend of yours?"

"Oh, no; nor any one else's, for that matter," replied the whaler. "He's a very ugly man, who is not liked very much by any one."

"I'm glad to hear that, for he certainly is a bad man, and I can prove it. He was paid to shanghai a boy whom he has got aboard his vessel, and we are going to help the lad to escape."

"It's just like him. But how did it come about?"

Frank detailed Walter Grey's history.

At its conclusion, he added:

"Ben Bolt shot me. I'm going to arrest him for it."

"If we meet the rascal and you don't happen to be around, you can rest assured that we will make him produce the boy."

"Good enough!"

After some more talk they parted.

Frank sent the ship up into the frozen air.

Turning to Dr. Vaneyke, he said to him cheerily:

"Now then, to find the mastodon, professor."

"Going now?"

"Yes; produce your directions."

The professor drew a paper from his pocket.

He carefully read it over and then said:

"The man who discovered the remains said they were to be found in the ground at the head of Tehekin Bay, fifty miles north of here, on the eastern coast. The place is marked by a solitary cedar tree."

"We shall be there in little more than an hour."

Frank turned the flying ice ship up the coast.

As she passed the place haunted by the birds they flew away in fear with a tremendous chorus of screams and violent whirring of wings.

The waves of the Kara sea were breaking in a long line of foamy surf along the icy coast, and far out upon the heaving waters great bergs and ice floes were seen drifting along.

It was bitterly cold in the frozen sky, and the moisture from the low hanging, gloomy clouds covered the Ranger with their vapor, which was quickly converted into slippery ice.

She was completely glazed with it in a short time, but the hot wires in the hollow masts kept the pivots free at the gyroscopes.

Pomp went down into the engine room to lubricate the machinery, and as Barney was already there, he dodged out of sight behind a dynamo, from whence he narrowly watched the darky's movements.

The fun loving Irishman had not forgotten the trick Pomp played on him in the Boston hotel.

He now saw a chance of evening matters up with the coon.

Unconscious of his danger, the diminutive darky went from one oil cup to another with the oil can in his hand filling them up.

As he was passing the dynamo behind which Barney crouched, the Celt passed a copper wire around his ankle and rapidly bound it there.

On went Pomp a few paces and paused at a point to be oiled.

The moment he touched the metal lid of the cup to open it, an electric shock flew through him that made him spring in the air.

"Ouch! Fo' de lan' sakes!" he yelled. "Wha' dat?"

He shook his fingers, glared at the oil cup, and then pondered.

The wire Barney fastened to his leg was secured to one pole of the dynamo, and the Irishman had run another wire from the other pole to the metal floor.

As the machinery was bolted to the floor, the moment Pomp touched any of the metal work, a complete circuit was made with his body, and a terrific shock was the result.

The Irishman chuckled over the success of his plan.

"Specs dey mus' hab been some current in dat cup," muttered the coon. "But de ain't no 'lectric connection dat I kin see."

Feeling safe to go on with his work, he grasped the oil cup cover again and made a second attempt to open it.

This time the shock was heavier.

"Wow!" shrieked the coon, and dropping the oil can, he gave another jump and started off on a run.

He didn't go far before he reached the end of the wire.

As he was going full speed, the jerk on his ankle pulled his leg from under him and he went to the floor with a bang.

"Sen' fo' de undahtakah, I'se a cead niggah!" he yelled, frantically.

He reached out his hand to assist himself to rise, but the contact with the floor completed the circuit again.

A wild whoop escaped him.

He humped up his back and bounced to his feet.

"I'se full ob it!" he howled. "Somebody insulate me!"

Just then he caught sight of the wire that tripped him.

He thought it was a loose piece into which his foot got tangled.

Intending to disengage it he hoisted up the bound foot across his knee, and to balance himself reached out one hand, and grasped one of the metal posts.

Another shock followed.

Pomp let out a roar that would have done credit to a Comanche.

He relaxed his hold and the post as if it were red hot, and made a wild rush for the other end of the room, bawling:

"De hull ship's 'lectricified! Ta'n on de hose! Lor' amighty, put me out! I'se 'lectrocuted! Help—help—help!"

Snap went the wire from his ankle just then.

It had necessarily been put on insecurely, and he gained his freedom.

Barney could not hold in his mirth any longer for the comical antics of the coon tickled him immensely.

"Roon ye spalpeen, roon!" he yelled, popping up from behind the dynamo. "If yez lucks back, yez will busht loike a bomb!"

Pomp paused.

It instantly flashed across his mind that Barney was responsible for the shocks he received, for the Celt was laughing immoderately.

"Lord amassa!" he gasped. "Yo' done dat, I'ish?"

"Is it ter me yez are alluding wid disrespect?"

"Jes' tell me dat—yo' done gib me dat 'lectricity?"

"Faix, it's an insoolt yez throw me be yez suspishey!"

"Once mo', Barney O'Shea," roared Pomp. "Yo' don't dat?"

"Do yez take me fer an electric eel?"

"Dat wuz a great joke," sadly said Pomp, returning. "I done gib yo' credit fo' dat, yo' ole flannel-mouf terrier! Shake han's on it. Dat's one on me, honey, sho's yo' born!"

He extended his big paw and Barney roared laughing.

"Beheavens," said he, "it's ther divil we O'Sheas bes at playin' good wans on ther nagurs. I'm glad yez takes it loike a man. Here's me fisht an' may ther next wan bate this joke!"

He slapped his hand into the coon's.

The moment Pomp got a grip on him he hauled off and gave Barney a terrible whack on the coat tails with his big foot.

"Harroar!" he yelled. "I'se got yer! Take dat, yo' babboon! An' dat, yo' ole snoozer! An' dat, yo' blamed son ob a gorilla!"

And biff—bang—boom! went his foot.

Every time he let fly Barney was raised from the floor.

As soon as he recovered from his astonishment, he struggled to get away, but Pomp had a grip like a vise upon him and would not let go until he booted the Celt all around the room.

"Beheavens, I thought yez wuz friendly," raved Barney.

"Yo' did, h'm? So I is chile. I lub yo' like a brudder. Golly how much mo' yo' spec' ob a feller?"

"Lave go av me."

"Not till I'se got froo."

"I'll be afther butcherin' yez."

"G'wan! Yo' done dat already!"

And with a parting hoister Pomp let him go.

Barney put on a sickly but winning smile and extended his hand.

"Shake hands. It's quits we are entirely," he observed sweetly.

"Git out ob heah, yo' white trash!" bellowed Pomp, picking up an ax. "Wanter play de same game on me, hey? Guess not, honey! Dey ain't no flies on dis coon, an' don't yo' fo'git it!"

"See here, me buck—"

"Clar out, or I'se gwine ter scalp yo' wif dis!"

And Pomp had such a ferocious look upon his face as he rushed for Barney, with the ax uplifted, that the Irishman took fright and fled from the room, gasping:

"Begorry, ther naygur's off his nut, an' there'll be a bloody ruction here wid me fer ther coopse av I sthay."

Pomp was satisfied.

A large ripe grin overspread his mug.

"Beat him dat time," he chuckled.

He laid aside the ax, and picking up the oil can, resumed his work with no further molestation from the Irishman.

All this time the ice boat had been going on up the coast.

In due course of time she reached the bay they were looking for and the professor located the lone cedar tree.

"There's our destination," he remarked.

"Exactly as you described," answered Frank, nodding.

"Land the boat near the tree."

"Very well," said Frank, and he did so.

A queer sensation at once assailed the Ranger.

Surprised at this Frank glanced out the window.

Here a startling sight met his view.

The ground seemed to be sinking under the weight of the Ranger.

"Good Heaven! What's this?" he gasped.

"There must be soft ground under us," replied Vaneyke.

"I'll raise the boat again!"

He grasped the gyroscope lever and turned it, but though the wheels spun around the ice ship did not rise.

Her runners and wheels had become caught and held fast by the treacherous ground under her.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAMMOTH.

LEAVING the boat in the professor's care, Frank rushed out on deck, and peering over at the ground, he saw that it was sinking down beneath the weight of the boat.

The icy covering had given away, exposing a muddy marsh, up from which a terrible stench was rising.

This smell came from the rotting carcass of a huge mammoth lying buried in the mud.

It was the animal which Vaneyke was hunting for.

This creature had probably stepped into the marsh centuries before, and sinking into the mire, was buried alive.

It had been preserved by the swamp freezing around it, and thus would have kept for an indefinite period, had not a thaw set in which rapidly decomposed the enormous body.

Exposed to Frank's view was an elephantine head, covered with dry, dark-gray skin, furnished with tufts of hairs, the neck was covered with a long flowing mane, and a reddish wool grew all over the exposed parts.

The long curved tusks were ten feet in length.

"What a stench! It is awful!" he muttered, holding his nose. "The mud has hold of the wheels and runners!"

Having seen how the Ranger was held Frank dashed inside, and telling the professor what he had seen, he pulled the levers controlling the side wheels and driving screw.

As they began slowly to revolve, the mud flew up from them in showers, and the runners having thus been cleared, the ascensional force of the gyroscopes lifted the ship up.

She freed herself this way and rose a few feet, then darted away.

Frank then stopped her machinery.

The professor had gone outside.

He viewed what little there was of the carcass on the surface, and, going back again, he said to Frank:

"We can't do anything with that object in the state it is now."

"What do you propose to do?"

"Only carry away the skeleton."

"Strip it of that rotten flesh?"

"No; we can let the scavengers of this neighborhood do that for us."

"How do you mean, doctor?"

"Blow the mud away from around that body so as to leave it exposed. The odor will attract the foxes and wolves here. They will devour the flesh, picking the bones dry."

"If they eat all the rotten meat," said Frank, "as there are tons upon tons of it, there will be enough for an army."

"As the food here is very scarce," replied the old scientist, "the wild beasts are ravenous, and as there are vast numbers of them they will soon get away with it."

"We might try the experiment, anyway."

"How shall I go about it, Frank?"

"I'll attend to it. You keep the ship over the marsh."

Frank went to the store-room as he spoke, and procured two fifty-pound bombshells, to each of which he fastened a wire.

Taking them out on deck, he let them drop one after the other down into the mud, on each side of the mammoth.

They sunk deeply by their own weight, coming from a height, and the other ends of the electric wires remained in Frank's hand.

"Raise the ice ship a hundred feet!" he sung out.

Dr. Vaneyke complied, there being plenty slack wire attached to the bombs.

Frank then handed him the ends of the wire, and said:

"In a minute you can touch them to the battery binding post."

"All right," said the professor, with a nod, and Frank went out again.

Peering down he saw that they were at a safe distance from the place where the shells would explode.

"When an ordinary gun-powder shell is fired on the battlefield," he muttered, "if it explodes in front of a man, he will get killed, while if it bursts behind him, the man will not be injured, for the force is all thrown forward. Now, in this case, as the shells will be burst from the upper side, the force will be downward, and that will throw the mud up, I think—"

But just here the professor touched the wires to the battery, a current passed down to the shells, and they exploded.

A smothered roar was heard, and a tremendous mass of mud was blown so high in the air that some of it splattered the underpart of the flying ice-ship.

When it subsided Frank looked down, and saw that a huge pit had been reut in the marsh, and in the middle of it laid the body of an enormous mammoth.

The carcass was somewhat mutilated by the shells, but none of the limbs had been torn off.

A mass of black, muddy water ran back into the hole from the ground, and settled around the body of the mammoth.

"Well?" asked the professor. "What luck?"

"The body is exposed. Come out here," said Frank, as he wound in the wire with which the shells were burst.

Dr. Vaneyke complied and was well satisfied.

After a short survey, he said:

"We'll soon have that skeleton. Wait here awhile, and you will see for yourself."

Over an hour passed by.

Then a dismal howling began.

It was repeated from different quarters.

They soon saw wolves and foxes swarming from every direction toward the body of the mammoth.

A horrible scene followed.

The wolves fought the foxes to keep them away from the carcass, and began to tear the mammoth to pieces.

Dozens, hundreds, thousands came from all points of the compass, and a frightful struggle went on amid snarls and yells, and the flesh was torn from the mammoth's body rapidly.

"There's no use remaining here any longer," said Frank, "for it will take several days to finish devouring all that putrid meat. Let us leave. We can return and gather up the bones."

"Where do you intend to go?"

"In search of the Red Eric."

"Very well."

Barney and Pomp had come out on deck, and as it was decided to send the ice-ship down over the Archangel sea, there to wait and watch for the whaler, no objection was raised.

It was getting so uncomfortably cold out on deck, that our friends were glad to go inside again.

The boat was steered away to the southward.

They spent a week in the frozen sky, searching for some trace of the whaler, but failed to see her.

Far in the north the ocean was frozen up and covered with drift ice which the currents carried to the southward.

But the warm current of the Gulf Stream kept the Russian shore-water clear enough for any ships to pass on to Nova Zembla, so they expected to see the Red Eric come along any moment.

Every day that went by the weather grew colder.

Terrible hail storms, blinding snow falls and fierce tempests were now of daily occurrence.

The thermometer mercury sunk below zero, and the icy particles in the frozen sky became so dense that at times it formed a mist, which they could not see through.

Indeed, it was dangerous to go out in it.

These fine needles attacked their skins so fiercely that it made their faces bleed and threatened to destroy their sight.

The moon looked like a big, crooked ball of fire, the aurora borealis played in beautiful colors in the northern sky, and the short days grew shorter still.

A suspicion that the whaler was not coming to the Kara Sea now began to dawn upon Frank's mind.

One morning he said to Dr. Vaneyke:

"I fear we have had our journey here for nothing."

"Nonsense!" replied the professor. "Isn't it something to get the bones of that mammoth, Frank?"

"Of little consequence to me in view of the more important work I have on hand," the inventor replied. "By this time the bones must be picked clean."

"Then suppose we go back and gather them up."

"I have no objections."

Just then Barney called down from the turret:

"Sail ho! Sail ho!"

"Where away!" cried Frank, running up-stairs.

"Beyant ter ther northaist. But it isn't ther Red Eric."

"How do you know?"

"Unless me oyes decaives me it's ther ship Sally Ann."

Frank now saw the ship.

She was a whaler, cruising along below them.

Barney was right: it was not the Red Eric.

"But, perhaps her crew might know about the latter vessel," thought Frank, and he said aloud: "Descend, until I speak to her captain!"

While Barney lowered the ice-ship, Frank went out on deck.

They were soon hovering over the vessel, and he addressed her crew telling them what the Ranger was, and asking about the Red Eric.

"See her," repeated the captain. "Of course I did. I was in her company several days. She is up in the North now."

"Where am I to find her?" eagerly asked Frank.

"She came up from Boston nearly a week ago, and has gone into winter quarters in Nordenskjold bay."

"Does she intend to remain there?"

"Yes—until spring."

Frank spoke at some length further.

Then he bade the captain adieu, and said to the professor:

"Start back for Tchekin bay, and we'll get the mammoth's bones. After that, in order to approach the Red Eric unseen, we will go toward her quarters overland."

"Good!" cried the scientist. "We may save the boy yet!"

The air-ship flew back to Nova Zembla, and headed for the marsh where the mammoth's body had been.

When they reached the place, they found nothing but the animal's skeleton, and took it aboard.

Then they started off to find Ben Bolt's ship.

CHAPTER IX.

CAUGHT IN A TRAP.

An immense plain of ice stretched away ahead of the Ranger, and an hour after she started, with Barney at the wheel, Frank came rushing in from the deck, and cried excitedly:

"Let her go for all she's worth!"

"What's the matter?" asked the startled Celt.

"Look back there and you'll see!"

The Irishman did so, and a pallor overspread his freckled face as he saw that the Ranger was being pursued by an immense cyclonic cloud which was sweeping over the island.

It extended from the sky to the ground, black as ink, vivid tongues of lightning flying out of it, and it swept everything before it with irresistible fury.

Blocks of ice were flying through the air with the force of cannon balls, great clouds of it, ground to powder, rolled up like a fog before the rush of the wind, and a roaring of the gale arose that sounded dreadful.

Barney put full speed in the driving wheels.

Click—click—click! they dug into the ice, the Ranger rushed on at a tremendous rate, and a wild buzz arose from the flying spokes and from under the steel runners.

"Be heavens, if that thing shtroikes us it's all over wid ther Ranger but ther shoutin'!" cried the Celt, nervously.

"We may be able to outstrip it in a race," said Frank.

"It's a-gainin' on us now."

"We'll hoist the sails."

"Can't we rise in ther air an' escape it?"

"No; don't you see that it would reach us before we got above it?"

"Thru fer you, Mither Frank."

The inventor dashed out on deck again, where Pomp and the doctor then were swiftly unfurling the sails.

Lending them his assistance, Frank quickly succeeded in getting the canvas up, and as there was a beam wind they hauled around the braces and stays, and the speed of the Ranger was materially increased.

She was now flying over the ice with all the speed at her command, and made a mile a minute.

The terrible cyclone was roaring on in her wake, its sable cloud spreading over a large tract of territory.

"We hold our own, so far," muttered the doctor.

"Golly, dis am wuss dan a lightning' express train," said Pomp.

"It's lucky we've got a clear field of ice ahead," Frank remarked, as he clutched the railing. "If we hadn't, that monster would soon reach us and hurl the Ranger up in the air."

They had to watch the sails closely.

The canvas was bulging as if it would burst from the bolt ropes, and the wheel motors inside were fairly howling as the armatures flew around at the top of the speed imparted by the battery.

Along they shot, the terrific pace undiminished, the runners bumping over the lumpy spots, crashing across the cracks, and plowing up the snow they encountered.

Mile after mile was covered.

The exciting race was kept up for the northeast, for the cyclone followed the trend of the land.

Suddenly the strain on one of the square sails became so great that it burst in two with a report like a gun shot.

In a moment the tattered canvas was wildly flying ahead from the yard, and as considerable power was lost, the speed of the Ranger was slightly diminished.

It made a vast difference, for the storm now began to gradually gain upon the ice ship.

The cloud was only a mile behind them.

"What a misfortune!" muttered Frank, in disgust.

"Kain't we rig a new sail, honey?" asked the coon.

"We couldn't," replied the doctor. "We haven't got strength enough. The wind would tear the canvas from our hands."

Just then a shower of small icy lumps carried on in advance of the storm struck the boat.

It rattled against her like a volley of bullets.

Pelted all over Frank and his companions were obliged to run into the turret for protection.

The missiles flying through the frozen sky in back of the first ones were very large.

As the Ranger continued to lose ground she now began to get pelted with these lumps.

Every blow that struck her gave back a metallic ring and the clattering crash of the ice breaking.

Barney now observed some vast ice hills off to the northwest about a league, and, pointing at them, he said:

"Faith it's pertection we'd be afther havin' if we wor ter get under shelter av thim cliffs, sor."

"Steer for them," said Frank.

"But we'se gwine ter lose groun' if we does."

"Never mind, Pomp, we're losing anyway."

"Begorra we're in a bad fix entoirely!"

"By heading for those cliffs we'll have a free wind," said Vaneyke.

"Good! You are right!" cried Frank. "That will increase our speed."

Around spun the wheel which had been geared to the ice rudder, and as the boat swung off on the new tack, Frank and the coon hastened out, and slackened off the braces.

Around went the yards.

The wind now caught them free.

Instantly the ship's speed was increased.

They did not feel the wind, now that they were going with it, but they continued to lose ground by tacking athwart the course of the cyclone, and the pelting ice blocks continued.

All hands were kept busy dodging them.

One of these blocks struck Pomp in the back and knocked him across the slippery deck.

He would have gone overboard, had Frank not reached out his hand and seized him.

Such a fall would have meant certain death for the ducky, as the ice ship would have left him astern, and the raging storm would soon have reached and destroyed him.

"Inside with you!" cried Frank.

"Golly! Why didn't I go ober?"

"Did you want to?"

"No, no!"

They could do nothing further out there so in they dove again.

The Ranger now resounded from the repeated blows she received, but she was rapidly nearing the icy cliffs.

Barney worked the wheel like a veteran ice-boatman and kept his eyes open for pitfalls filled with snow and crevices that could trip the boat or wedge the runners.

There were many openings among the ice cliffs, and as the Ranger dashed up to one of them the cyclone was only a short distance astern of her.

"Take that narrow gorge!" cried Frank.

"Shure it may not go in all ther way," expostulated Barney.

"True, but it will afford us most protection."

"Jist as you say, me bye!"

And into it dashed the ice-boat like lightning.

The pass was winding, and the bottom lumpy, and Barney grasped the levers with one hand.

All the rest went out to haul down the sails.

Around a curve swept the Ranger, as the canvas fluttered down, and Barney gave utterance to a startled exclamation, and hastily cut out the current for the pass terminated in a cul-de-sac.

The ice-ship was plunging with fearful velocity straight at the wall that rose to an immense height in front of her.

It seemed for a moment to Barney that she must run her long bowsprit against the hard wall.

Such a collision would probably smash her to pieces.

He rapidly lowered the side wheels.

Putting on the current he reversed the wheels, and they tore through the ice with a terrific ripping sound.

The boat did not pause at once.

She slid along a considerable distance, her wheels ripping up the ice and sending it flying in two streams on each side of her.

Barney was frightened.

There came a bang as the bowsprit struck.

But the shock was not heavy enough to break it.

The pole had run into a crevice, and there it was jammed.

Flung down by the collision, every one thought for a few moments that some serious injury had been done to the ship.

In this belief they were undeceived, as soon as they got upon their feet and saw how she struck.

The cyclone had by this time hit the cliffs.

Huge fragments of ice were torn off and hurled in the air, and a shower of splintered particles rained down in the ravine.

They drove Frank and his companions inside.

Further retreat was cut off by the dead wall, and the boat could not move any way on account of the bowsprit being caught.

All they could do was to wait.

The storm cloud raged fiercely about the cliffs.

It seemed to make an effort to tear them to pieces.

In this design it met with some success, but it finally passed on, leaving a broad trail of devastation behind, and sending enormous blocks of ice thundering down from the cliff tops.

Once it had passed ahead, Frank and his companions broke the ice away from around the bowsprit with axes, and released her.

She was then turned around.

Going aboard, they ran her back for the entrance to the ravine to get out on the icy plain again.

But when they reached the place, where the opening had been, they found it blocked up by tons of the ice that had fallen down from the cliff tops.

The ice ship could not get out.

Every one was alarmed by this, for the ice blocks were so high and thick that they saw no possible means of getting the ship over it, for the top of the gorge was too contracted to allow her to fly up and thus pass the barrier.

CHAPTER X.

PLUNGED IN A LAKE.

A CONFERENCE was held by the four adventurers to devise a means of overcoming the icy barrier choking up the exit of the ravine, and Frank finally said:

"The only way I can see out of the difficulty is to melt it."

"How yo' gwine ter do dat?" asked Pomp in perplexity.

"By means of electric heat," promptly answered Frank.

"Faix, it's a puzzle yer givin' us entoirely," said Barney.

"I'll explain: by forming a wire net over the ice and charging it with all the heat we use for the boat, the ice can gradually be melted away enough to let us get through."

"Such a plan will consume much time," said Dr. Vaneyke, "but as no better solution of the problem can be advanced, let us try it."

"By de time we done reach Nordenskjold bay," said Pomp, "de Red Eric mebbe be gone away."

"I hope not," Frank said.

They saw no more of the cyclone that drove them into the pass, and set to work to carry out his idea.

The days were now so short that most of the work was done by moonlight.

Frank's plan operated, but it took a long time to melt the icy barrier, and deprived of the heat, the interior of the *Ranger* became cold and cheerless.

A day and a night passed before they finally got the ice ship out on the icy plain again, and resumed their journey over the ground toward the place where the whaler was in winter quarters.

The question that most troubled them was whether Ben Bolt had the shanghaied boy aboard his ship yet.

They did not know that he had contracted with Alfred Milburn to put Walter Grey out of the way, so the lawyer could gain possession of the boy's fortune.

Nor did Bolt know that the lawyer was in prison, Mrs. Grey in possession of her husband's fortune, and Frank on his track to rescue the boy.

The mammoth's bones did not interfere with the *Ranger's* work, whether she was in the sea, on the ice, or in the air, as she was calculated to carry a much greater weight.

Barney and Pomp were so delighted over their escape from the pass that they got out the fiddle and the banjo and struck up a lively melody as the ice ship sped along.

The cyclone had left a broad trail where it swept over the ice, tumbling great blocks here and there, sending the loose snow up in great drifts, and sweeping the ice perfectly clean.

"Had the *Ranger* been caught in its grip," said Frank, "there would by this time have been nothing left of her."

"Then it's lucky we ran into that cul-de-sac," answered Vaneyke.

"Now to locate Nordenskjold Bay."

"It's on the northwest coast, ain't it?"

"Yes," answered Frank.

"Why did Ben Bolt go there?"

"Very likely to avoid the whalers in the strait."

"You think he must have had an object in so doing?"

"It is my impression that he yet has the shanghaied boy on his craft, and did not want the other whalers to know it. In a lonely, desolate place like the bay is where the Red Eric lies, he can put the unlucky boy out of the way, and no one will be the wiser. Don't you see the point?"

"That's just what I thought, Frank."

At this moment a fine big reindeer bounded into view from behind a mass of icy blocks.

The beast cast a frightened glance of its big soft eyes at the boat, and wheeling around, it sped away.

"There's fine game!" ejaculated Frank.

"For those who can catch it."

"I think we could drop him."

"With a rifle?"

"Yes, if I can get in range."

"Try it."

"You take the wheel."

The professor grasped the spokes, put on more speed, and Frank took a rifle and went out on deck.

The deer was speeding over the ice like the wind, and the ice boat rushed after it furiously.

A loud buzz arose from the wheels and a cracking from under the big steel runners.

Fast as the deer was going, the animal was no match for the ice-ship, and it gradually bore down upon the creature.

"The deer is going in a long curve," said the doctor.

"Can't you cut across the curve and head it off?" asked Frank.

"Yes. That will bring us nearer the sea coast."

"Go ahead, then. I want to get in range."

The deer was heading for the coast; but, for some reason was describing a sort of semicircle.

Dr. Vaneyke, instead of steering along in the animal's track now took a short cut with the boat.

Only half the distance to the shore was covered when Frank raised his rifle and fired.

The deer bounded up in the air and fell dead.

"Hurrah! you've dropped him!" cried the professor.

"Cut across toward him, doctor!"

Vaneyke was about to carry out this order when the ice suddenly began to crack and snap under the boat like a volley of artillery.

Then it broke in.

Down sank the *Ranger* in the midst of the smashing ice, and a tremendous upheaval of water.

There was a lake beneath the thin ice which emptied in the sea.

She had gone into this.

It was low tide, and much of the water had run out from under the sheet of ice, so that when the boat broke through she went down five feet before she touched water.

The ice over a large area had split and caved in all around the *Ranger*.

It was to go around the lake that the deer had been going in a circle was now very evident.

A cake of the ice struck Frank a violent blow and knocked him overboard into the freezing water.

Scarcely had he landed in the brine when down came the ice upon his head and he was buried out of sight.

Pushed under the water he sank to a considerable depth.

When he arose his head was under the ice.

It held him under the water so he could not breathe.

For an instant Frank was so bewildered that he felt sure he was go-

ing to drown; then he pulled his faculties together and, realizing his position, he dove down and swam under water.

It was lucky for him that he went in the right direction, for he came up in clear water beside the boat.

Had he not done so he certainly would have drowned.

Grasping one of the runners, he held himself up until he got his breath, and then climbed up to the deck.

No one knew what had befallen him until he went inside the turret, where he found Barney and Pomp with the doctor.

"Good Heaven, what does this mean, Frank?" asked the latter.

"Knocked overboard by a cake of ice."

"Lord amassy, chile, why didn't yo' yell?" asked Pomp.

"I scarcely had time to even breathe."

"Yer'd better change yer clothes an' take a sup av whisky," advised Barney, "or be heavens it's a cowl in yer head yez will catch."

Frank laughed and dove down-stairs.

When he returned in a change of clothing, he showed no ill effects from his involuntary cold bath.

He found his companions devising a means of getting out of the trap into which the deer had lured them.

"The only way to do is to start the gyroscopes revolving," said Frank. "Let her land near the dead deer."

This plan was carried out.

The boat landed on solid ice again.

As soon as the ice-ship landed beside the carcass of the deer Frank went aground and secured the best portions of it.

They then resumed their journey to the northward.

Numerous indentations were met with along the coast and a keen lookout was maintained for the whaler.

As they proceeded the ice grew rougher.

Mighty cliffs rose here and there, vast glaciers were crossed, valleys were traversed, and they had to skirt the bases of huge rocky ridges, and towering mountains.

Everything presented a wild and picturesque appearance perfectly desolate as far as humanity was concerned, and yet teeming with birds and beasts.

How these creatures subsisted in that barren region was a mystery; but it was clear that they gained a very meager living as was evinced by their gaunt bony forms.

League after league was passed over.

Frank finally made a calculation, and referring to a chart, he said to his friends in the cabin:

"We must be very close Nordenskjold bay now."

"Faix, it's no soign av a bay have I seen in some time."

"Neither have I," said the doctor.

"But the distance traversed warrants the belief that we are near it," persisted Frank.

Barney was just about to reply when there came a yell from Pomp, up in the turret.

"Dar's a anchored ship now!"

Every one was startled.

They rushed up-stairs.

Off to the right they saw the vessel.

As soon as Frank saw her he cried:

"It is the Red Eric!"

The whaler, stripped of her canvas, was moored to the shore of a large bay in a great basin below an eminence upon which the ice-ship had just come to a pause.

CHAPTER XI.

BEARDING THE LION IN HIS DEN.

THE appearance of Captain Ben Bolt's ship so close by sent a thrill through the crew of the *Ranger*.

Not a soul was to be seen upon the whaler, and Frank at once caused the ice-ship to recoil out of sight.

"Well," said Dr. Vaneyke, "there is the ship we are after. Now what do you intend to do about it, Frank?"

"First, ascertain if Walter Grey is aboard of her."

"How will you go about it?"

"I'm going down alone to investigate."

"That's a dangerous piece of business."

"Very true, sir, but I am not afraid to venture."

"Well, we will keep a sharp watch upon your movements from up here, and if we see that you need our assistance, all hands will be ready to go down to your aid."

"That suits me."

And so saying, Frank armed himself with a brace of pneumatic pistols and a knife, and leaving the *Ranger*, he strode away.

At some distance from the boat, he observed a cleft in the ice, down which he could go to the shore of the bay.

The water in which the whaler floated was open in the middle, but the shores were frozen up, excepting for a stretch that extended outward from where the boat laid.

Frank made his way down to the shore.

It was then quite dark.

The young inventor started toward the ship.

He did not see any one upon her.

But there was a man's face pressed against a parted curtain at one of the bull's-eyes in the stern.

He was intently watching the inventor.

This individual was Ben Bolt.

He was astonished to see Frank, but did not recognize him in the

fur costume he wore, for the hood covered most of the young man's face to ward off the cold.

Frank walked from one end of the boat to the other.

Finding a ladder at the side he made his way up to the deserted ice covered deck and saw a light in the cabin windows.

From down in the fore-castle came the sound of sailors' voices, and a stream of smoke was pouring up from a funnel in the deck, showing that the whalers had fires going below decks.

He had scarcely observed this when the cabin door opened.

The captain strode out, muffled up in heavy clothing.

"Hello thar!" he exclaimed.

"Hello yourself," replied Frank.

"Whar d'you hail from?"

"My ship, in another section."

"What craft is that?"

"The Ranger."

"Whaler?"

"No, an exploring boat."

"Oh, I see! Won't you come inside?"

"I don't mind. It's bitterly cold out here."

The captain led the way into his cabin, and Frank followed him, closing and locking the door, and taking the key.

Not another man was in the cozy little room.

"Sit down," said Bolt, pointing at a chair beside the table.

"Thank you," replied Frank complying, and Bolt seated himself opposite.

"Now give us an account o' yerself."

"Well," replied Frank, "I'm searching for a certain party."

"Shipwrecked crew?" queried the captain, curiously.

"No," replied Frank, fixing a keen glance on the man. "A stolen boy!"

"What!" roared Bolt, with a sudden start.

"A boy who was shanghaied."

"The deuce!" gasped the captain excitedly.

"His name is Walter Grey."

"By thunder!" roared Bolt, turning pale.

"And he was carried off on this ship from Boston!"

With a wild glare in his eyes, the captain regarded Frank as if he were some horrible apparition.

"That voice!" he muttered, rising.

"Do you recognize me?" asked the inventor, uncovering his face.

A yell of alarm escaped the captain when he saw who his caller was, and he recoiled a step, exclaiming:

"Ther feller wot I shot!"

"Yes," assented Frank, as he whipped out a pistol and covered the wretch with it, "and if you utter a word to betray me to your crew, I'll put a ball in your brain!"

"For God's sake don't shoot!"

"Fall on your knees!"

"Yes, yes!" said Bolt, and down he went.

"Now lie on your face!"

"I won't!"

"Quick!"

"Yes, yes!"

And down he went.

Frank smiled and glanced around.

There were plenty things to tie him with.

The inventor secured a long, stout lanyard.

"Place your hands behind your back!" he ordered.

"Don't kill me!" whined the captain, as he obeyed.

"I won't if you behave. I'll simply render you helpless so you can't show any treachery."

And Frank bound the captain's arms behind his back.

Bolt was then allowed to sit up.

He was pale and agitated beyond all measure.

"Now see here, my man," said Frank, sternly, "I've chased you all the way here from Boston to rescue Walter Grey—"

"I don't know nuthin' about him," growled Bolt.

"That's an infamous lie, for I saw Alfred Milburn carry him aboard of this ship when you and your two men were at me. Before I left Boston Mrs. Grey was out of the lunatic asylum and Milburn was forced to disgorge her fortune. He is now in prison for what he did!"

The feelings of Ben Bolt upon hearing this were indescribable.

He realized that the plot had been exposed, which made him liable for complicity, and reasoned at once that he had lost all chance of getting the extra \$2,500 Milburn offered to pay him for putting the boy out of the way.

Indeed, he now stood a good chance to go to prison for what he had done in the matter.

"Ther game's up!" he groaned.

"Yes," assented Frank. "All the lies you utter now will not avail you in the least. If I like I can take you away and put you in jail. But I will be easy with you."

"Yes, yes," eagerly said the captain.

"But only under one condition."

"What is it?"

"You must give up the boy."

A look of despair crossed the captain's face.

Frank saw the expression and began to feel uneasy.

He waited a few moments, and as the captain said nothing he cried:

"Well? Well—why don't you answer?"

"I can't do wot yer want."

"Why not?"

"Cause I ain't got ther lad."

"You haven't?"

"No."

"Where is he?"

"Sent adrift."

"Explain yourself."

"Yesterday this craft was on ther sea. A quarter boat wuz towin' astarn, ther boy in it, apaintin' ther ship. Ther rope must ha' broke leavin' him adrift on ther sea, cause we found ther end o' ther broken painter, an' missed ther quarter boat."

"Are you lying?"

"No! I swears to it."

Frank eyed him searchingly.

He was a good reader of character, and realized that Ben Bolt was telling the truth about the matter.

"What time yesterday did this occur?" he asked.

"In ther afternoon, about three o'clock."

"Where was this ship?"

"Two leagues from land, off the mouth o' this bay."

"What doings?"

"Huntin' fer a whale one o' ther men seen."

"That settles it. I'm going to look for that boy. If I find that you have committed any crime in this case, I shall run you down, and put you in jail!"

The captain was silent.

He had secretly cut the painter leaving the boy adrift.

But this, he of course kept to himself.

Frank unlocked the door and flung it open, when the captain caught sight of some of his men on deck.

"Help! Help!" he yelled.

"Shut up!" exclaimed Frank.

"Shoot that fellow! He tried to kill me!" proceeded Bolt.

"Villain!" cried the inventor, angrily.

He saw the men rushing aft, and not to get caught in a trap he hastened out on deck.

One of the men had a pistol and seeing Frank, fired at him.

The ball clipped a piece out of the side of his jacket and he at once shot the man down.

A yell arose from the others and they ran up forward.

Frank rushed to the side and hastened down the ladder.

No sooner had he reached the ground when the rest of the crew came tumbling up from below.

The inventor saw that an encounter with the whole crew would be a very serious matter.

He therefore started to run away, when they all came swarming over upon the ice after him.

With loud cries of hostility they started off in pursuit of Frank.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BOY AND THE WOLVES.

"FRANK! Frank!"

This cry startled the inventor.

He glanced up, and saw the ice ship launch itself into the air and come sailing toward him.

Vaneyke was in the turret, and it was he who shouted.

The professor darted the search-light down into the eyes of the whalers bringing them to a pause.

Barney had gone out on deck with a rope.

One end was tied to the rail, and the other was dangling down.

As the boat swept over him Frank grasped the noose in the end of the line, and shouted, cheerily:

"I've got it!"

Up went the Ranger the next moment.

To the astonishment of his pursuers Frank was whirled up into the air over their heads, and before they could recover from their surprise he was far beyond their reach.

Pomp now rushed out on deck.

Assisting Barney they pulled Frank up.

As soon as he reached the deck he thanked his friends for their timely assistance, and going into the turret with them he explained what Ben Bolt confessed to him.

"The case looks hopeless now," said the professor.

"I don't agree with you," said Frank.

"How can you expect to find the boy?"

"By searching, of course. You must remember that the Gulf Stream sweeps along this shore. It would carry the quarter boat along with it. We must follow its course."

"Are yez sure ther captain didn't lie?" asked Barney.

"I noticed that one of the quarter boats was missing. That fact seems to bear out what he asserted."

"But mebbe de boy got asho'," suggested Pomp.

"He might," Frank admitted; "but if the boat was towing she would not be apt to have oars in her by means of which Grey could row her."

"Why don't you think so?" asked the professor.

"Because," replied Frank, significantly, "if it was to the financial interest of Ben Bolt to have that boat break loose he would have taken mighty great pains to see that no oars were in the boat."

"Den yo' flink de boat wuz bruck loose apuppose, honey?"

"Most decidedly I do. I can see the hand of Captain Ben Bolt in that rascally deed very plainly."

"How shall I steer the Ranger?"

"Up the coast, doctor."

Vaneyke accordingly changed the ice ship's course. They left the Red Eric out of sight astern in the gloom, and were soon flying over the sea close to shore.

The rays of the search-light were bent down. Sweeping the coast and sea continually as the boat was lowered, there was not much chance of an object so large as a quarter-boat being missed by its broad glare of light.

The Ranger hovered but one hundred feet above the sea. She went along very slowly.

To the left laid a great patch of clear open water, in which no ice could stay without melting.

This was the northern arm of the Gulf Stream.

Supper was served.

Our friends now kept watch two by two.

Outside it was frightfully cold, for the thermometer mercury had fallen to thirty-five degrees below zero.

The air was fogged around the boat by clouds of fine needles of ice, through which the moonlight shone, making the sky gleam and glisten like polished silver.

To go out in this frozen moisture in the air, leaving any part of the body exposed, meant frost bites of the severest kind, as our friends knew by past experience.

The night passed wearily away.

When day came, no sunlight appeared until eleven o'clock.

Even then it only lasted three hours.

The character of the scenery changed below.

All along the coast was a great sheet of pack ice, and the interior of the land assumed a rugged, mountainous aspect.

"It hardly seems probable that the boat could have landed here," said Frank. "That shore ice would keep it away."

"There's more likelihood of it having been crushed by the floating ice cakes," replied the professor.

Just then Barney came in from the deck.

"Shtop her!" he exclaimed.

"What for?" demanded Frank.

"Shure, I see ther quarther boat."

"You do? Where?"

"We've passed it."

Frank lowered the Ranger, turned her around, and flung the light ahead at a spot indicated by the Irishman.

It was a heap of pack ice on the frozen coast.

Jammed in among the ice was a boat.

The position of the boat, half buried under the shelving ice, was such that it was almost hidden from view.

"No wonder we missed it," said Frank.

"Faix, I'd a misht it meself," replied Barney, "only I had a telescope in me fist, so I did."

The Ranger was brought to a pause above the boat a few yards, and they saw that it was empty.

It contained no oars.

At the bow was a painter with a frayed end.

Frank eyed the ice with a glass, and saw a mantle of snow on it.

Presently he gave utterance to an exclamation.

"By jingo! a trail!"

"What?" eagerly asked Dr. Vaneyke.

"There's a track of human footprints in the snow on the ice that run in toward the coast yonder."

"Made by Walter Grey?"

"The marks are small—evidently those of a boy's foot."

"Frank, I think we'll find him now."

"I hope so, professor; anyway, we'll follow the tracks."

He kept the flying machine within a few yards of the ice, and sent her slowly along inland toward some steep cliffs.

These enormous precipices towered up a thousand feet in the air, and formed the base of a tremendous mountain, which stood on the verge of the sea.

Every one was on the alert now.

Along went the Ranger, and she presently drew close to the base of the cliffs.

Here a big beach was seen.

It looked as if it were the bed of a great mountain torrent.

The well defined trail passed into this place, and the Ranger followed it up into the gloomy defile.

Frank had to raise the boat every few moments as the path sloped upward at an acute angle.

After awhile they reached a level plateau at the top of the cliffs and observed that the trail ran to the left.

The Ranger still pursued it.

"How fortunate that no wind or snow storm occurred here since these tracks were made," commented Frank. "Had it occurred the trail would have been obliterated."

"Wha' de deuse dat chile gwine up heah fo'?" asked Pomp.

"He must have had some purpose in view for doing it."

"Begorra, there's no ind to ther spalpeen's walkin'," said the Irishman. "It's off we'll foind his legs when we roon across him."

"Hark! What's that?" interposed Frank.

They all listened.

For a while deep silence ensued.

Then they heard a faint, distant cry.

It came from the direction they followed.

And it was in a human voice too!

"Some one in distress," said the professor.

"Wha' dem yudder woices?" asked the coon.

"Wolves!" cried Frank, after a pause.

"Faith, it's aint' ther lad they must be!" cried Barney.

"I'll hurry the boat along," said Frank.

But just as he was about to do so she sunk to the ground, her gyroscopes having almost stopped whirling.

"Heavens! What's this?" gasped Vaneyke.

"Something must have happened to the dynamo!"

"I'se gwine down fo' ter see."

"We can use the batteries on the runner wheels yet!" cried Frank.

He started them going and followed the trail easier now.

At the same moment he heard a terrible noise up the mountain and saw an enormous snow slide coming down the side toward them. Once this mass of tons upon tons of snow fell on them the ice-ship would be buried.

The Ranger was now rushing ahead again down a steep declivity that terminated at the edge of the lofty cliffs.

Ahead Frank now saw a boyish figure in the midst of a pack of ravenous wolves.

He was armed with a revolver with which he was firing into their midst, while he shrieked to frighten them away.

Up to him rushed the ice ship.

Barney ran out on deck and stood at the side of the boat to render the boy aid.

"Pomp!" screamed Frank. "Is the dynamo fixed?"

"Yassah!" came the reply. "Only a wire got unfastened."

"There's a wall ahead! We can't go much further this way, Frank."

"I'll have to go over the edge of the cliff then, doctor."

"Good heavens!"

Into the pack of wolves rushed the boat, scattering the howling beasts right and left, and a scream of joy burst from the boy's lips when he saw her coming.

CHAPTER XIII.

OFF THE CLIFF.

"SHTOP ther Ranger—quick!"

"All right, Barney."

"Give us yer hand, me bye!"

"Here you are, sir."

"All roight, Frank, go ahead! I've got him."

And up on the deck Barney hoisted the boy in a twinkling.

Frank looked up and saw the avalanche of snow almost upon them and then glanced ahead.

Many mighty ice blocks obstructed the Ranger's path, and as she could not turn around and retrace her course, Frank resolved to try a desperate plan.

He determined to rush off the top of the cliff.

Accordingly he spun the wheel around and the boat dashed like lightning to the edge of the precipice.

As quick as a flash he pulled the gyroscope lever.

To his horror, the wheels did not lift the boat at once.

Were they madly dashing to their doom?

Death seemed certain if they went off the cliff, but it was too late to do anything else now, as he could not stop her, nor had he room to swerve her aside.

A cold sweat burst out all over him.

"Heavens!" he gasped. "Pomp told me the dynamo was fixed."

A shout of intense horror escaped Frank's companions, and as the boat leaped like a cannon ball from that appalling height, every one instinctively grasped something to hold himself.

Far out from the cliff shot the Ranger.

She was closely pursued by the avalanche.

Every one gave a gasp as the boat began to fall.

But when they observed that she went down very slowly, they realized that they were not doomed yet.

Indeed, the gyroscopes had been revolving from the moment Frank first turned the lever; but as it required a few seconds for the current to get them spinning fast enough to buoy the ship up, they had not sustained the Ranger immediately.

As soon as the ice boat gained its equilibrium in the air however, she came to a pause and hung there.

The avalanche of snow poured over the cliff and fell with a dull roar down upon the ice below.

"God bless me sowl," said Barney. "We're floyin'!"

"Is this the end of us?" asked a trembling voice beside him.

It was the boy who spoke, and he gazed around shudderingly for he thought they were going to drop to the earth.

He was the same boy whom Frank had made an effort to defend in Boston, and he wore the same natty cap and military school uniform beneath a rough coat much too big for him.

His wan pale face bore the stamp of great suffering, too.

Barney shook his head and replied:

"We're safe. Shure this is a floyin' machine."

"Oh—I see."

"Come insoide, me bye."

He led Walter Grey into the turret.

The poor fellow was half frozen.

Our friends warmed him up, fed him, put fur clothing on him, and finally told him all about what had happened in Boston and their subsequent search for him.

He was amazed at the story.

When it was finished, he said:

"I had a hard time of it aboard the Red Eric when I revived from the drug. Bolt made me work with the crew. There I got nothing

but kicks and cuffs, poor fare and hard work. At the time they were looking for the whale, I was towing astern mixing paint in a quarter boat. Ben Bolt appeared at the taffrail and cut the painter. I was left adrift. No attention was paid to my cries. The current carried me to where you found the boat. Thinking I might find some one on shore, I went up on the cliffs. A pack of wolves attacked me. I had a pistol which I found aboard the Red Eric, but it did little good. If you hadn't arrived just in time, the beasts would have killed me."

"Then Captain Ben Bolt deliberately cut you adrift?" asked Frank.

"Yes. More—he said, as he did it, I've been waiting for this chance to put you out of the way, I won't let it slip! That showed me that he thirsted for my life."

"I'll make him answer for his evil work!" declared Frank.

"How do you mean, Mr. Reade?"

"Why—I'll make a prisoner of him, carry him back to Boston, and put him in prison for his wickedness."

"Do you know where to find him?"

"Why, yes—in Nordenskjöld bay."

"Don't you think he will leave there after what happened?"

"Probably. But he can't escape me though."

The flying ice ship was steered down the coast again.

When she reached the bay, Frank found the ship gone.

"She certainly did not go northward," said the inventor to his friends. "We would have seen her if she had. Therefore we must go to the southward to find her."

"Perhaps she has gone to the strait."

"That's the only open place in which she could find a safe refuge," said Frank. "We'll return to the Norwegian fishing station."

According to this plan, they continued on to the southward.

On the following morning the doctor was at the wheel, and Barney went out on deck to examine the shore with a glass.

The cold was keen and piercing.

Warmly clothed as the Irishman was, he shivered, for the moisture over the Gulf Stream was very dense, and congealed into those fine penetrating particles in greater profusion here than elsewhere.

They seemed to fairly go through his furs.

His eyes were protected by goggles, and he had drawn on a pair of fur overshoes, which were strapped to his legs.

Pomp had assisted him to put these pattens on with a most suspicious kind of zeal, which Barney failed to observe.

The Irishman stood at the stern a few minutes watching the shore with his glass; then he attempted to return to the interior.

He could not budge an inch.

His feet refused to leave the deck.

A look of surprise overspread his face.

"Begob, I'm shtuck!" he gasped.

Then he made a second effort to walk away.

It proved to be as futile as the first, and the expression of perplexity upon his face deepened into one of blank dismay.

"Howly jim-jams!" he ejaculated. "Me legs is that numb I've lost control av thim intoirly!"

He struggled frantically to move, but fell on his back, the soles of his fur shoes glued to the deck tenaciously.

"Murder!" he howled. "I'm a-goner. Hey, Pomp! Hey, Pomp!"

"Wha' yo' wan', honey?" responded the coon, rushing out of the turret with a broad grin on his ebony face.

"Send fer a lawyer till I make me will! I'm a corpse."

"Wha' de mattah?" chuckled Pomp, grinning harder than ever behind his face protector.

"D'yez moind ther legs av me?"

"Dey's long enough."

"It's paralyzed they are. I'm doyin' from me toes up'ards."

"Why doan' yer git up?"

"I can't. All power have left me intoirly."

"Ise gwine ter see 'bout dat," said Pomp, with a roar of laughter.

"Howld yer gob!" roared Barney, angrily. "Is it laughin' yez are at a dead man? Be heavens, I'll bate yez black an' blue!"

And he gave Pomp a thump in the neck that made him see stars.

"Glory to de lamb!" roared the coon. "Wha' fo' yo' soak me dat way, yo' ole scallawag—h'm!"

And so saying he rushed up at Barney, grabbed him by the nose with a vise-like grip, and gave that organ such a twist that Barney roared and clinched him.

For a few moments they struggled, but as Barney could not move his feet the coon had the best of it.

He was just going to pull Barney's hair, when Frank came out on deck and shouted wrathily at them.

Up jumped Pomp and inside he rushed to escape a scolding which Frank now poured out at the Irishman.

"Didn't I send you out here to look for the strait?" he asked.

"Yis, sor," groaned Barney.

"Get up from there!"

"Yis, sor," and the Celt complied.

"Come here!"

"I can't!"

"Why can't you?"

"Me legs refuses ter boodge, sor."

Frank saw that he could not move, and walking over to the Irishman he knelt down and examined his shoes.

He quickly detected the cause of Barney's plight.

"Did you soak the soles of your fur boots in hot water before you came out in this freezing temperature?" he asked.

"Why, no, sor," replied Barney, in astonishment.

"Well, they've been treated that way and are frozen fast to the deck."

"Arrah, it wuz koind ther naygur wuz ter help me on wid 'em!" said Barney. "Av coorse he didn't do it, but if yez will onstharp thim for me, I'll folly that coon an' bate ther flure wid his liver!"

"Up to his jokes again," sighed Frank, as he released the Irishman. "But let it pass, Barney, for there's the strait now and we'll have to spend our time looking for the whaler instead of playing practical jokes."

"Begorra, ye've saved ther loife of ther coon," said Barney, as he left his fur shoes stuck fast to the deck and hastened inside after Frank out of the cold.

The doctor had turned the ice ship to the leeward.

She sped along inland over the strait, and in a couple of hours reached the Norwegian fishing station.

As Frank glanced down he saw four ships.

They were the three he had seen there before, and the Red Eric as well.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

THE whalers who had made their quarters at the settlement saw the air-ship almost as soon as our friends saw their vessels, for the search-light of the Ranger was brightly blazing.

All hands surrounded the flying machine as soon as she landed, and one of the captains eagerly pressed forward and cried:

"We've captured the whole crew of the Red Eric for you, and searched their craft, but hang me if we can find the boy aboard!"

"For the very good reason that I've got him!" answered Frank.

"Why, how's that? They denied they had him."

"Because Captain Bolt tried to murder him."

"Good Lord! Is that so?"

"Yes; cut him adrift in a quarter boat."

"Then you picked the lad up, hey?"

"Yes, we found him on the ice."

"Good enough! Where is he?"

Frank called the boy out, and while standing at the side of the Ranger, Walter told the whalers his pitiful story.

It incensed them against Captain Bolt, and by the time the boy had finished his recital, many a threat was muttered against the rascally captain.

"Let's hang the villain at the yard arm of his craft!" said one.

"Don't use violence," remonstrated Frank.

"But he richly deserves it."

"Very true, but I have other plans in view."

"What are they?"

"I have been hunting for him to capture him and bring him back to Boston to answer for his crimes."

"You'll put him through the courts?"

"Such is my intention. I owe the rascal a debt of vengeance for once having shot me, and on another occasion inciting his men to try to murder me."

"Well, your plan's a good one. We'll put him in your hands."

"How about his ship?"

"The first mate's a good man and can manage her."

"Bring him to me, then, and I'll lock him up aboard here."

Several of the sailors were dispatched aboard the Red Eric in a boat.

When they returned, they not only had the captain with them, but he was shackled hand and foot.

He cast a baleful glare at Walter Grey when he saw him with Frank's party, and snarled, in ugly tones:

"So they've found ye, hey?"

"Yes, and you know what to expect now," said the boy.

"Wot kin yer do? I ain't done no harm."

"For shanghaiing this boy and attempting to kill him," said the inventor, "you can be sentenced to a long term in prison."

"Are yer goin' ter take me off o' my ship?"

"Yes, and you'll go back a prisoner with me."

This announcement started the captain swearing furiously, and to put an end to it Frank had him confined aboard the Ranger, where he was no longer heard.

A severe lecture was given to his crew, and they were told to clear out of the strait with the Red Eric.

This they hastened to do.

Frank and his friends remained at the station several days.

It was then decided to return home.

The mechanism of the flying machine was accordingly well overhauled, and when everything was in readiness for departure, our friends took leave of the whalers.

Going aboard the Ranger, her gyroscopes were put in motion, and she soared up into the frozen sky.

Here she vanished from view among the clouds of icy needles, and sped away to the southwest.

A favoring breeze was encountered, the canvas was shaken out, and under the additional speed thus imparted, she quickly left cold Nova Zembla out of sight.

She remained in a frozen sky until she reached the North Atlantic, and finally got back in a latitude where the days and nights were what they were accustomed to.

Everyone was pleased over the success of their trip, for in spite of

the hardships they endured, they had saved Walter Grey, secured the skeleton of the mammoth and captured Ben Bolt.

There was an ugly prospect ahead of Dr. Vaneyke, though, for he knew that upon his return to Readestown he would have to answer for the murder of which he was accused.

Being entirely innocent, though, he did not shrink from it for he felt sure of being able to vindicate himself of the crime which had driven them adrift in the frozen sky.

The flying machine finally crossed the Atlantic.

She finally reached the suburbs of Boston and landed in private ground at the dead of night, so that no one but the owner knew of her being there, and he had no objections.

The bones of the mammoth were here unshipped, and having been packed in a number of cases were sent to Washington.

This done, Captain Ben Bolt was put into the hands of the police, who already knew how he shanghaied Walter Grey.

When the additional charges were lodged against him, he was finally sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, and went to join the rascally lawyer, Alfred Milburn.

Having disposed of the captain, Frank next took Walter Grey home to his mother.

The meeting of the mother and son was very touching.

When they got over their first transports of joy, they turned to speak to Frank, and thank the generous young inventor for what he had done for them.

But Frank was gone.

He had quietly gone away.

Expecting their gratitude, and not wishing to suffer the agony of their effusions, he left them united, well satisfied with having done his duty in saving the young military student.

Returning to the Ranger, the inventor boarded her with his friends, and headed her for the west.

Her destination was Readestown.

She made rapid headway toward the pretty little city, Barney playing his fiddle and Pomp thumping his banjo.

The weather was very stormy.

When they reached Readestown the wind was blowing a gale and as they attempted to land in Frank's grounds, the storm caught the flying ice-ship and drove it toward a church steeple.

Frank made a desperate effort to steer it away, but failed to succeed, for it struck the steeple with a terrific shock.

"Throw over a grapnel!" screamed Frank.

"What's the matter?" gasped Barney.

"The gyroscope lever is broken!"

Frank had been grasping this lever and the shock caused him to jam it over when full power was thrown into the gyroscopes.

The flying ice boat would have gone up, up, up, high in the sky until it could have been repaired had not the inventor caused the grapnel to be hung over.

It caught in one of the windows in the steeple.

Every moment the gale was slamming the boat against the spire, threatening to demolish the Ranger.

If that happened she was apt to fall to the ground and kill her crew and Frank realized it.

It made him desperate.

"We will have to abandon her!" he cried, at last.

"Can't yo' sen' her down?" asked Pomp.

"Not till the gyroscope lever is repaired. It would occupy an hour or two to do that. In the meantime we may get killed."

"What shall we be afther doin' sor?" questioned Barney.

"Slide down the anchor rope to to the steeple."

There was no alternative.

They thought they could get the air-ship when the storm blew over, so Barney and Pomp tied their fiddle and bnajo to their backs and all hands hastened out on deck.

Grasping the grapnel rope they slid down one after the other to the steeple and safely reached a platform there.

Scarcely was this done when the wind caused the Ranger to give a sudden plunge, and the grapnel tore itself free.

The next moment the flying ice-ship shot up in the air and disappeared in the dark storm cloud.

A week afterward when her batteries gave out she fell into the ocean thousands of miles away and was swallowed up.

Our friends were sorry enough to lose her, but glad to save their lives, and finally descended the interior stairs of the spire and reached the ground in safety.

They returned to Frank's house where they were warmly greeted by the inventor's family.

On the following day Frank went with Vaneyke to the police station so the doctor could surrender himself.

Here, to their joy, they learned that the real murderer had been exposed, and was then in prison awaiting trial.

He was the man who had accused the doctor of the crime, and two men going by the scene of the crime had witnessed his villainy.

That cleared Dr. Vaneyke, and the detective who had made such a desperate effort to capture him was very profuse in his apologies for what he had done to annoy him.

The professor then left Readestown and went to Washington to attend to the articulation of the mammoth's skeleton.

As for Frank and Barney and Pomp, they were very much chagrined over the loss of the Ranger, but finally forgot about her when the inventor announced his intention to build a new contrivance with which they might make a journey.

He had the details of this arrangement perfected in a very short time, and they then began to build it.

This invention was destined to be a wonder in its way, and they put it to use in a most thrilling manner.

Let us not anticipate, however.

We have another tale ready for our readers about the new marvel, which will appear next week in the Frank Reade, Jr., series, and as we will meet with the three friends again let us pause here.

[THE END.]

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